



THE SUNSET SONG  
& OTHER VERSES



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THE SUNSET-SONG

AND OTHER VERSES



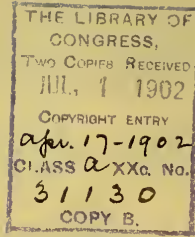


**T**he Sunset Song  
and other  
Verses by

*Elizabeth Akers.*

BOSTON LEE & SHEPARD MCMII

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THE SUNSET-SONG AND OTHER VERSES.

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To the Dear Memory of  
MY MOTHER

WHO IN HER GIRLHOOD WAS

MERCY FENNO BARTON

WHO DIED IN HER YOUTH, AND WHOM I HAVE ALWAYS

MISSED AND MOURNED

WHOSE REMEMBERED TENDERNESS HAS BEEN

MY GREATEST BLESSING

AND WHO, HAD SHE LIVED, WOULD HAVE BEEN

MY FONDEST FRIEND AND MY KINDEST CRITIC

*This Book Offering*

IS MOST LOVINGLY DEDICATED





## Contents

	PAGE
The Sunset-song . . . . .	1
Two Pioneers . . . . .	4
The Pipe of Pan . . . . .	6
Beside the Sea . . . . .	8
“Cruel and Sweet” . . . . .	9
Ah, Could we Find . . . . .	10
Exiles from Arcady . . . . .	12
“But for a Moment” . . . . .	14
The Discerning Ear . . . . .	14
Cutting the White Birch . . . . .	16
Love’s Requiem . . . . .	18
Bird-wisdom . . . . .	21
Over the Wall . . . . .	22
Two Saints . . . . .	24
A Tornado . . . . .	28
Aunt Lyd . . . . .	32
Only Friends . . . . .	39
James Gates Percival . . . . .	40
An Awaited Guest . . . . .	41
A Wind-blown Leaf . . . . .	42
A Vacant Lot . . . . .	43
Had He but Known . . . . .	45

## Contents

	PAGE
The Author of "Harrington" . . . . .	46
The Weaver . . . . .	47
Afterward . . . . .	50
Awaking . . . . .	50
A Disguised Blessing . . . . .	51
At Sunset . . . . .	52
The Heart's Desire . . . . .	54
Another May . . . . .	57
A Baby's Grave . . . . .	58
A Forgotten Poet . . . . .	60
A Child Sweetheart . . . . .	61
The Little White One . . . . .	62
Under the Beating Rain . . . . .	63
A Window-light . . . . .	64
Another Year . . . . .	66
Guiltless? . . . . .	68
A Neglected Grave . . . . .	69
The Wayfaring Tree . . . . .	71
"Being Dead, yet Speaketh" . . . . .	74
The Baby's Guardian . . . . .	75
Johnny Appleseed . . . . .	78
In London Streets . . . . .	88
A Forgotten Garden . . . . .	93
Body and Soul . . . . .	96
The Old-fashioned Churn . . . . .	101
The Last Clover-bloom . . . . .	105
The Rail Fence . . . . .	106
From Afar . . . . .	115
Harvest Time . . . . .	116

## Contents

	PAGE
Fifty Years . . . . .	118
Dew-drops . . . . .	120
The Passing . . . . .	121
Circumstance . . . . .	123
Bramhall Hill . . . . .	125
Loneliness . . . . .	127
The Harbinger . . . . .	128
The Story of Thomas Fish . . . . .	130
The Whippoorwill . . . . .	139
The Thunderer . . . . .	140
An Amiable Child . . . . .	146
The Miracle-workers . . . . .	150
A Little While . . . . .	156
Going a-Summering . . . . .	157
Mary Livingstone . . . . .	159
Dreams . . . . .	162
Old Themes . . . . .	162
Nearing the End . . . . .	165
Always There . . . . .	166
If Youth were Everlasting . . . . .	167
The Cuckoo-clock . . . . .	167
Two Points of View . . . . .	169
The Story of Kidzh . . . . .	170
True . . . . .	174
The Man and the Tree . . . . .	176
Left Alone . . . . .	179
The Red Columbine . . . . .	180
When Nothing Grows . . . . .	182
The Ice Glen . . . . .	184

## Contents

	PAGE
Faith and Sight . . . . .	187
Blowing Bubbles . . . . .	188
A Farmer's Wife . . . . .	190
Rain in the Night . . . . .	192
Witch-hazel . . . . .	193
A Winding Stream . . . . .	196
The Ministry of Hassan . . . . .	197
A Silent Love . . . . .	200
A Star . . . . .	203
The City Where No Man Dwells . . . . .	204
The First Red Leaf . . . . .	206
My Air-castle . . . . .	208
Married and Gone . . . . .	211
Leah for Rachel . . . . .	212
Linadore . . . . .	213
Judgment . . . . .	215
Evanescence . . . . .	217
If You Should Come . . . . .	219
In a Thunder-shower . . . . .	220
A Morning Dream . . . . .	221
Flying Home . . . . .	224
A Dead Sweetheart . . . . .	225
I Gave You a Ring . . . . .	226
A Midwinter Night Storm . . . . .	227
The Red Flower . . . . .	232
If I Had but a Lovely Face . . . . .	234
Spring Snow . . . . .	235
Safe with the Dead . . . . .	237
The Lily Pond . . . . .	240

## Contents

	PAGE
Spring in Winter . . . . .	242
Ingratitude . . . . .	244
Ode to Anactoria . . . . .	245
Ode to Monotony . . . . .	246
Out of the Cold . . . . .	248
O Fire-flies, Trim your Lamps . . . . .	250
One Woman . . . . .	251
The Night Wind . . . . .	252 ✓
Ode to Aphrodite . . . . .	254
The Meadow Sheaves . . . . .	255
The Blush-rose . . . . .	256
The Last Letter . . . . .	258
True Prophecy . . . . .	259
Two Souls . . . . .	261
The Vine and the Lily . . . . .	264
The Ludovicean Juno . . . . .	266
Does Shakspeare Care? . . . . .	268
Where Are They? . . . . .	269
A Faithful Heart . . . . .	271
Two Moons . . . . .	272
Why? . . . . .	274
Trees Felled in Winter . . . . .	275
Toward Sunset . . . . .	276 ✓
The Call of the Full Moon . . . . .	278
The Wind and the Leaf . . . . .	280
The Time to Come . . . . .	282
“ Help Thou Mine Unbelief ” . . . . .	283
Phaon, the Ferryman . . . . .	285
A Sun of Death . . . . .	287

## Contents

	PAGE
Songo River . . . . .	290
Old Songs . . . . .	294
Homeless . . . . .	295
Love's Flitting . . . . .	297
Under the Dog-star . . . . .	298
The Vesper Sparrow . . . . .	299
A Midnight Visitor . . . . .	300
The Poets' Solace . . . . .	303
Why, Love, do You Pass Me By ? . . . . .	305
The Sweetest Songs are Never Sung . . . . .	307
Rock Me To Sleep . . . . .	309





## THE SUNSET-SONG

**I**S it a dream? The day is done,  
The long, warm, fragrant summer day;  
Afar beyond the hills, the sun  
In purple splendor sinks away;  
The fire-fly lights her floating spark,  
While here and there the first large stars  
Look out, impatient for the dark;  
The cows stand waiting by the bars;  
A group of children saunters by  
Toward home, with laugh and sportive word,  
One pausing, as she hears the high  
Soft prelude of an unseen bird —  
“Sweet — sweet — sweet —  
Sorrowful — sorrowful — sorrowful!”

Hist! how that clear, aerial tone  
Makes all the hearkening woodland still!

## The Sunset-song

Dear twilight voice that sings alone !  
And all the child's quick pulses thrill ;  
Forgotten in her heedless hand  
The half-filled berry-basket swings ;  
What cares she that the merry band  
Goes on and leaves her there ? He sings !  
Sings as a seraph shut from heaven,  
And vainly seeking entrance there,  
Might pour upon the listening even  
His love and longing and despair, —  
“ Sweet — sweet — sweet —  
Sorrowful — sorrowful — sorrowful ! ”

Deep in the wood whose giant pines  
Tower dark against the western sky,  
While sunset's last faint crimson shines,  
He trills his marvellous ecstasy ;  
With soul and sense entranced, she hears  
The wondrous pathos of his strain,  
While from her eyes unconscious tears  
Fall softly, born of tenderest pain.  
What cares the rapt and dreaming child  
That duskier shadows gather round ?  
She only hears that flood of wild  
Melodious, melancholy sound, —  
“ Sweet — sweet — sweet —  
Sorrowful — sorrowful — sorrowful ! ”

## The Sunset-song

O wondrous spirit of the wood !  
No skylark, bearing up to heaven  
His morning-hymn of gratitude, —  
No nightingale, that chants at even  
Amid the red pomegranate-blooms, —  
No bulbul, in his fragrant dell  
Where Persia's rose-fields breathe perfumes,  
Knows half the passionate tale you tell  
To hearts which never can forget !  
O lonely voice among the pines,  
She hears your ringing music yet,  
When sunset's last faint crimson shines, —  
“ Sweet — sweet — sweet —  
Sorrowful — sorrowful — sorrowful ! ”

Down from immeasurable heights  
The clear notes drop like crystal rain, —  
The echo of all lost delights,  
All youth's high hopes, all hidden pain,  
All love's soft music, heard no more,  
But dreamed-of and remembered long ; —  
Ah, how can mortal bird outpour  
Such human heart-break in a song ?  
What can he know of lonely years,  
Of idols only raised to fall,  
Of broken faith and secret tears ?  
And yet his song repeats them all, —

## Two Pioneers

“Sweet — sweet — sweet —  
Sorrowful — sorrowful — sorrowful !”

Ah, still among Maine's darkling pines,  
Lofty, mysterious, remote,  
While sunset's last faint crimson shines,  
That singer's resonant echoes float ;  
And she, the child of long ago,  
Who listened till the west grew gray,  
Has learned in later days to know  
The meaning of his mystic lay ;  
And often still in waking dreams  
Of youth's lost summer-times, she hears  
Again that thrilling song, which seems  
The voice of dead and buried years, —  
“Sweet — sweet — sweet —  
Sorrowful — sorrowful — sorrowful !”

## TWO PIONEERS

**F**LOWER-O'-THE-LEDGE, how dare you  
peep  
While even the violets stay asleep,  
While never a leaf is on the tree,  
And scarce a blue-bird is here to see ?  
Much I marvel that thus you dare  
Shake your blooms in the chilly air  
Even before the frost departs ;

Sprays of tremulous, snow-white hearts,  
Delicate, dainty, as fairy bells  
Tinkling in elf-land's haunted dells —  
Shivering under the drift's wet edge ;  
Ah, how dare you, flower-o'-the-ledge ?

Before the battle is wholly won  
Between the ice and the lukewarm sun,  
You herald the year's dim, doubtful dawn,  
As slowly, slowly the spring comes on,  
While nightly the hoar-frost clings and nips,  
And daily the snow-bank thaws and drips,  
And the hickory, oak, and chestnut tree  
Wait and hesitate timorously  
As scarcely trusting their buds to burst  
Till your frail beauty has ventured first ;  
Fragile, exquisite, soft, and small,  
Flower-o'-the-ledge, you shame them all !

Pink-o'-the-rock, how brave you are !  
Clinging to boulder, crag, and scar,  
Blessing the gray and barren stone  
With living beauty before unknown,  
Starring with blossoms rosy-fair  
What without you were bald and bare ;  
Not even grasses could keep alive  
In those dry seams where you live and thrive —  
Narrow rifts in the flinty crust

## The Pipe of Pan

Holding a handful of wind-blown dust ;  
At drought and tempest alike you mock,  
Brave and patient pink-o'-the-rock !

### THE PIPE OF PAN

**H**ERE in this wild primeval dell  
Far from the haunts of man,  
Where never fashion's footstep fell,  
Nor shriek of steam nor clang of bell  
Nor din of those who buy and sell  
Has broken Nature's perfect spell,  
May one not hear, who listens well,  
The mystic pipe of Pan ?

So virgin and unworldly seem  
All things in this deep glade  
Thick curtained from the noonday beam,  
That, hearkening, one may almost dream  
Fair naiads plashing in the stream,  
While graceful limbs and tresses gleam  
Along the dim green shade.

The cool brook runs as clear and sweet  
As ever water ran ;  
I almost hear the rhythmic beat  
Of airy footfalls, light and fleet,  
As Daphne speeds, with flying feet,  
To hide with leaves her safe retreat —  
But not the pipe of Pan.

## The Pipe of Pan

On yonder rocky mountain's sides  
Do oreads dance and climb?  
In that dark grot what nymph abides?  
And when the freakish wind-god rides  
Do sylphs float on the breezy tides,  
While in the hollow tree-trunk hides  
The dryad of old time?

Or is the world so changed to-day  
That all the sylvan clan  
Nymph, naiad, oread, sylph, and fay  
Have flown forevermore away,  
So, though we watch, and wait, and pray,  
Never again on earth will play  
The witching pipe of Pan?

Come, sit on yonder stone and play,  
O Pan, thy pipe of reeds,  
As when the earth was young and gay,  
Long ere this dull and sordid day, —  
Play till we learn thy simple lay,  
And grief and discord fade away,  
And selfish care recedes!


O darkened sense! O dense deaf ear!  
The world has placed its ban  
Against the genii, once so dear,  
And strife and greed for many a year  
Have spoiled the sweet old atmosphere,



Beside the Sea

So, though he play, we cannot hear  
The wondrous pipe of Pan !

BESIDE THE SEA

 SUN, that sinkest slow behind the sea,  
The sea that like my soul can find no rest,  
Carry a message to my love for me !  
His sails long since grew dim against the west,  
Leaving behind the one whom he loved best,  
Who loved him utterly.

Tell him the ring that on a golden night —  
—Alas, these selfsame hues were in the sky !—  
He gave me, in the sweet uncertain light,  
Placing it on my finger tenderly,  
Kissing it close, and saying, “Till we die,”  
Has never grown less bright.

Worn smooth by kisses, washed with many tears,  
It keeps our troth-plight ever fresh and new ;  
Not once removed in all these wasting years,  
It holds my heart to his, and keeps me true,  
And every lengthening month, the seasons through,  
His memory more endears.

The name he wrote has melted in the brine,  
And storms have swept his footprints from the sands,  
As time his image from all hearts but mine ;

“Cruel and Sweet”

But wind, nor rain, nor toil in many lands  
Has worn his farewell kisses from my hands,  
Nor wrought my faith's decline.

O moon, that risest from behind the sea,  
Calm as a steadfast soul that has no fears,  
Bring some sweet tidings from my love to me!  
Tell me he loves me still, despite the years, —  
Tell me this long, long pain, these patient tears,  
Not all in vain must be!

O sighing wind, that wanderest long and late  
Wherever the discovering daylight shines,  
Seek him, wherever he be swept by fate,  
In olive shades, in valleys veiled with vines,  
Or where the snow-fall shrouds the lonesome pines,  
And tell him that I wait!

“CRUEL AND SWEET”

“**C**RUEL and sweet, his hands reach down to  
hell” —  
Thus sang the Celtic bard of Love's strong  
spell,

And his wild wailing words of passionate pain  
Were heard by lonely rocks and moaning main

Long, long ago, — yet still as true they be  
As when they saddened first the sighing sea.

Ah, Could we Find

His vows are as the fickle winds that pass ;  
His oaths are brittle as the frosted grass ;

The gifts he brings are made of fairy gold  
Which turns to dead leaves ere the day is old.

Who wears his flowery fetters, oft must bear  
Pain, sore denial, poverty, and care ;

Must give up pleasure, peace, and selfish ease,  
For wearying tasks and thankless ministries.

Often he wrongs the fondest faith and trust  
And brings the proudest forehead to the dust.

He dooms to exile, or to prison cell ;  
“ Cruel and sweet, his hands reach down to hell ” —

Yet, O sad singer, think awhile and tell —  
Reach they not also up to heaven as well ?

AH, COULD WE FIND

**A**H, could we find one steadfast mind,  
One heart forever true and kind,  
Whose faithful hold through storm and cold  
Would clasp us still when we are old,  
When life's warm flow grows sad and slow,  
And fading locks are dropt with snow !


If one sweet soul with wise control  
Would guide us to the highest goal,—  
    If one dear smile undimmed by guile  
    Would shine around us all the while,  
So we might know the way to go,  
Nor blindly slip and stumble so,—

How free from fears were all our years!  
How should we smile at age and tears!  
    What heights sublime our souls might climb!  
    How triumph over pain and time!  
Life's golden bowl, though years might roll,  
Would still be full, and still be whole!

Or if we knew but how to woo  
And keep for aye youth's fire and dew,  
    Then love would stay through life's long day,  
    Nor ever frown nor fly away;  
Would hold us fast through shine and blast,  
And soothe our parting souls at last.

But deathless youth and changeless truth  
Bloom not on earthly soil, forsooth,  
    And so we long, in sigh and song,  
    To find, afar from woe and wrong,  
Some happier sphere made bright and dear  
By all the joys denied us here!

EXILES FROM ARCADY

 H, it was fair in Arcady !  
Birds built and sang in every tree,  
And trill and warble, chirp and song,  
Rang sweet and clear the whole day long ;  
The violets blossomed all the year,  
No lightnings scathed our happy sphere,  
Nor frost congealed on wood or lea,  
What time we dwelt in Arcady !

The apple-blooms passed not with May,  
The morning-glories smiled all day ;  
No cloud arose to chill and warn,  
The world of roses had no thorn —  
No briars rent, no insect stung,  
The year was ever warm and young,  
And beauty, youth, and harmony  
Were always ours — in Arcady !

Ah, we were blest in Arcady !  
Our hearts were innocent and free,  
We had no word for doubt or fear,  
We knew no sorrow and no tear,  
We felt no heart-ache and no pang,  
But lived and loved and laughed and sang —  
Nor dreamed that heaven could happier be  
Than our glad life in Arcady !

No falsehood dwelt in Arcady,  
Nor crime, nor shame, nor poverty ;  
    Each dawning brought some blessing new,  
    All eyes were kind, all hearts were true,  
No shadows fell our lives across,  
There were no partings and no loss ;  
    'Twas joy to simply breathe and be  
    In that blest realm of Arcady.

How did we stray beyond the bound  
Of that most sweet enchanted ground ?  
    How is it that we yearn and wait  
    Forevermore outside the gate,  
Whose two dread sentries, Care and Pain,  
Will never let us in again ?  
    Where are the password and the key  
    To give us back our Arcady ?

O friend, who wanderest here with me  
Outside our olden Arcady,  
    Grieve not too sorely that no more  
    We walk those ways beloved of yore ;  
But as we look, through mists of tears,  
Back to those earlier, happier years,  
    Lean on me, and rejoice that we  
    *Together* mourn our Arcady !

“But for a Moment”

“BUT FOR A MOMENT”

**I** WILL not think of thee as gone afar  
To some invisible and distant shore,  
Unreached by human eye or earthly lore,  
Farther from me than the remotest star  
Where undiscovered constellations are  
The sparkling dust of heaven's eternal floor;  
But rather say: “Why should my heart be sore?  
After the long day's tumult, toil, and jar,  
Thy work is done a little while before  
My own, and thou hast entered, gladly free,  
Into a brighter room, and left the door  
Of its calm peace and rest unclosed for me  
To follow soon, — and in a moment more,  
My darling, I am coming after thee!”

THE DISCERNING EAR

**A** PRATTLING baby in her second year,  
She often paused amid her play awhile,  
With lifted finger and attentive ear, —  
“Moozit!” she said, and listened with a smile.

With tender face transfigured with delight,  
And eyes like morning azure still and clear,  
Seeming to look toward some invisible height, —  
“Moozit!” she said, and held her breath to hear.



## The Discerning Ear

The hearts which loved her often strove in vain,  
Hushing to silence every wondering word,  
To catch the sound of that mysterious strain  
That only by her finer sense was heard.

But soon they learned the music was her own,  
Reaching her ear alone, though crowds were by ;  
No other listening soul, save hers alone,  
Could hear the faint, celestial harmony.

Only for her, amid the mingled throng,  
Did airy fingers sweep invisible strings ;  
Only to her the breath of exquisite song  
Came softly, like the touch of unseen wings.

By night and day, in field and crowded street,  
In life's still hours, and in its dissonant stir,  
In care and grief, those breathings low and sweet  
Of fine and fitful melody solaced her.

So through her life, whose dearest blessings were  
Those music-wafts from a diviner sphere,  
She thanked the kindly fate which gave to her  
That one good gift of the Discerning Ear.

CUTTING THE WHITE BIRCH

HE grew among her kindred there  
In sylvan solitude,  
Tall, lissome, beautifully fair,  
Dainty and proud beyond compare,  
Loved playmate of the sun and air —  
The Lady of the Wood.

Seldom within the quiet place  
Did human sound intrude,  
Or human footstep leave a trace ;  
Where leafy branches interlace  
She dwelt, in free unhindered grace,  
The Lady of the Wood.

She heard the thrush's evening hymns,  
The brook's soft interlude ;  
She felt the dew, when twilight dims,  
And its soft lamp the firefly trims ;  
Cool rain fell on her fair white limbs —  
The Lady of the Wood.

In radiant beauty ever young,  
And every day renewed,  
She lived and danced, rejoiced and sung,  
And round her head fresh chaplets strung,  
Gayest her lovely mates among —  
The Lady of the Wood.

## Cutting the White Birch

All gentle things were glad to greet  
Her happy maidenhood ;  
Wild creatures sought her green retreat,  
Birds sang for her their carols sweet,  
Pale flowers bloomed about her feet,  
The Lady of the Wood.

Her graceful garments twinkled bright  
With sun and rain imbued ;  
Her life so glad, her heart so light,  
She scarcely seemed to sleep at night,  
But sang when all the stars were white, —  
The Lady of the Wood.

One day, a strong young woodman came  
And saw her where she stood  
Unharm'd by praise, untouched by blame ;  
He planned, with bold and selfish aim,  
To bring her proud young head to shame,  
The Lady of the Wood.

Taught in the rough world's greedy mart,  
He knew no tender mood ;  
But chose her from her mates apart,  
And with most base and cruel art  
Cut to the core her trusting heart —  
The Lady of the Wood.

Alas, for her who was so fair !  
Where once in pride she stood,

## Love's Requiem

Now with rent robes and white limbs bare,  
Her last sighs saddening all the air,  
She lies in uttermost despair —  
    Poor Lady of the Wood !

### LOVE'S REQUIEM

**P**OOOR Love is dead !  
What foe has humbled that fair head ?  
    Did stern neglect, with gradual chill,  
Freeze the young life in every vein ?  
    Or doubt's slow venom-drops distil  
Their palsyng power in heart and brain ?  
    Or self's cold serpent — woe the day ! —  
Strangle the cherub where he lay ?  
    Poor Love !   Poor Love !

    Ah, Love, even so  
The wise world questions, — but we know  
    That while in rosy shadows deep  
You dreamed your brief and happy dream,  
    Dark falsehood stabbed you in your sleep ;  
You woke to see his dagger gleam,  
    To know what hand had wrought your pain, —  
To sleep, — but not to dream again —  
    Poor Love !   Poor Love !

    How still he lies,  
Poor Love, with death in his dear eyes !

## Love's Requiem

With broken bow, and arrows lost,  
With white lips dumb, and soft wings furled, —  
With all his roses blanched by frost,  
And all his golden locks uncurled, —  
His crowning wreaths in fragments strown,  
And half their sweetest buds unblown —  
Poor Love! Poor Love!

Since Love lies cold,  
The morning skies have lost their gold,  
And all the world seems dull and drear;  
He was so gentle and so sweet,  
So full of joy and hopeful cheer,  
Though winds might blow and rain might beat;  
What earthly boon has charm or grace  
Without the brightness of his face?  
Ah, dear lost Love!

O Love most dear!  
How shall we live, and you not here?  
Whether the bosom of the earth  
Is cold with snow or warm with grass,  
What shall we care? How little worth  
Will circling seasons be, alas,  
With all that they can bring or own,  
If we must meet them all alone,  
Without dear Love!

## Love's Requiem

Alas ! Alas !

How slowly will the sad years pass  
Which we must live without his smile !  
How can we bear life's wear and fret,  
And how endure the dreary while  
Until death comes, and we forget ?  
What is there left to prize or crave  
When Love is dead and in his grave ?  
Poor lost, lost Love !

O dearest, best !

We must not beat the aching breast,  
We must not show a tear-stained face,  
Nor wring our hands, nor tear our hair,  
Nor mourn you in the market-place, —  
But in a dumb, dead silence, bear  
What language never can express —  
The awful pain and loneliness  
You leave, dear Love !

Dear Love, good night !

Now we must hide you out of sight ;  
Here be your grave, by Lethe's stream,  
Whose waves slip by without a sound, —  
Where care, and grief, and bliss supreme,  
And long, long pain alike are drowned, —  
Where not an echo murmurs low,  
And only soft white poppies grow ;  
Good night, dear Love !

BIRD-WISDOM

**H**OW does the last year's bird, that never saw  
 An egg, a fledgling, nor a half-built nest,  
 Know to obey her species' annual law,  
 And when the snows melt, and the rivulets thaw,  
 To start upon her busy April quest,

And gather straws, and threads, and tufts of moss,  
 Tangles of wool from cruel pasture burs,  
 Plumes dropped from wings which never knew their  
 loss,  
 And shape of them, with limber twigs across,  
 A shelter for the brood that may be hers ?

Who bids her bind it close with grassy strings,  
 To hollow it, and round it with her breast,  
 To line it with all soft and kindly things,  
 Even the down from underneath her wings,  
 Until it is a smooth and perfect nest ?

And when its tiny treasures greet her sight,  
 Those silent spheres of future joy and song,  
 Soft blue, or sprinkled brown, or pearly white, —  
 Who tells her to protect them day and night,  
 And keep them hidden close and warm so long ?

Who teaches her to cherish them so well,  
 To brood and watch the fragile things above ?

## Over the Wall

How does she know the germ within will swell  
And gather strength to break the brittle shell,  
And be a living thing for her to love ?

Who knows ? Though Nature teems with mysteries,  
She never grants us an enlightening word ;  
The hoariest sage among us, and most wise,  
Can only wonder with admiring eyes  
At the fine wisdom of a little bird.

Surely these feathered folk, who live so near  
To Nature, understand her deepest lore,  
And, breathing in a purer atmosphere,  
Know what the wind says to the leaves, and hear  
What the soft ripples whisper to the shore.

Roaming the realms of ether, they may know  
Truths never touched by our imaginings,  
And when they look on us so far below —  
Poor plumeless creatures, creeping to and fro,  
Pity our want of wisdom and of wings !

## OVER THE WALL

**W**HEN cares beset my brain  
And worries haunt my breast,  
And I turn my pillow again,  
Trying in vain for rest



## Over the Wall

From the thought of what may be  
Or is past beyond recall,  
I close my eyes and see  
The sheep go over the wall.

The wall has a broken place  
Where the stones have fallen down,  
And across the gap they race,  
White sheep, and black, and brown,  
Crowding with might and main  
And hurrying onward all;  
In an everlasting chain  
The sheep go over the wall.

One after one after one  
They rush for the narrow breach  
In a long and level run —  
And I count them each by each;  
They rise on the hither side,  
On the other side they fall;  
In a ceaseless, endless tide  
The sheep go over the wall.

I hear their pattering feet  
On the smooth and solid ground,  
The regular rain-like beat  
Of soft monotonous sound;

## Two Saints

Till feeling and memory cease  
In sleep's resistless thrall,  
And I sink in dreamless peace  
While the sheep go over the wall.

## TWO SAINTS

A Tribute to the Memory of Henry Bergh,

FOUNDER OF THE FIRST AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE  
PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

“Judge not a man by his demeanor toward his superiors, who may reward or punish him according to his deserts; nor by his behavior to his equals, whose rights and advantages are as good as his own; but by his treatment of such as he deems his inferiors, who are helplessly in his power, without defence or appeal — this is the real test of a gentleman.”

**T**HERE was a holy man in ancient days,  
Who spent his life in humble prayer and  
praise,

Taking the lowly Nazarene for teacher;  
To him, the Word he loved, with silent speech  
Said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach  
My truth to *every creature.*”

Dear literal soul! He read, and he obeyed —  
No changing of the text he sought or made;  
But held that it embraced from the beginning,  
Bird, reptile, fish, and all four-footed things, —  
The world that burrows, browses, swims, and sings,  
No less than man, the sinning.

He craved no salaried place in church or state ;  
He left to priests and bigots all debate  
Of differing creeds and various orthodoxies —  
And without scrip, or staff, or gathered alms,  
Went forth to preach his faith and chant his psalms  
To squirrels, birds, and foxes.

Dear single heart ! His bride was Poverty —  
He even threw his leathern girdle by  
As luxury, and wore a rope about him —  
This first and holiest of the Cordeliers ; —  
And, heeding not the laughter nor the jeers  
Of those who chose to doubt him,

Into the woods and fields he took his way ;  
The shy wild creatures saw him preach and pray, —  
Peered at him, curious, and paused to hear him ;  
His heart was pure : Obedience was his guide,  
And Chastity walked ever by his side —  
Could even the weakest fear him ?

Timid four-footed folk came round his feet ;  
Birds perched upon his shoulder, warbling sweet ;  
Flocks followed him, and herds forgot their grazing ;  
All innocent eyes perceived him pure and good ;  
Doves nestled in his breast, as he pursued  
His way with prayer and praising.

## Two Saints

And ever since, all loving hearts which heed  
The woes of dumb things, as they toil and bleed  
    Beneath man's cruelty and life's hard chances,  
In grateful memory of the legend old,  
Offer love's incense to the tender-souled  
    Gentle and dear Saint Francis.

In modern times, there came another saint, —  
Not tonsured and hemp-girdled, in the quaint  
    Old-fashioned manner of the monkish preachers, —  
A man with men, he brought to beasts and birds  
A gospel of good deeds instead of words, —  
    Saint Bergh of All Dumb Creatures.

He saw them suffering, helpless, bound, and meek ;  
He heard the plea of mouths which could not speak,  
    And read in scars and stripes their wretched story  
Of goad, and bruise, and savage lash and thong ;  
And made the righting of their voiceless wrong  
    His life-work and his glory.

For them his thought was busy day and night ;  
For them he bore the shafts of scorn and spite —  
    Drank to the very dregs the bitter chalice  
Mixed evermore by this ungrateful world  
For true reformers ; bore the javelins hurled  
    By hatred, greed, and malice ; —

In their behalf he strove for juster laws  
Till careless legislators heard his cause,  
    And forged him weapons for his noble battle  
Against the wrongs which angels' eyes might weep,  
Of tortured horses, overdriven sheep,  
    And cramped and crowded cattle.

In noisome pens where pitiless savagery  
Bids poor beasts suffer torments ere they die —  
    In scenes of fright, and force, and merciless slaughters,  
There did he labor, strive, and intercede,  
And overcome ; did he not cast indeed  
    His bread upon the waters ?

For them he left the popular brotherhood  
Of men who work for only selfish good,  
    Where many a baser spirit could outrank him —  
And under scathing words and baleful eyes,  
Wrought tirelessly to ease the miseries  
    Of beasts, who could not thank him.

Thank him ? they did not even comprehend  
That he was their protector, helper, friend ; —  
    He was to them, despite his service tender,  
But one of that harsh race which wronged them so ;  
Alas ! how cruel that they could not know  
    Their savior and defender !

## A Tornado

How had they fawned about him, had they known  
The half they owed him, who had made his own

The woes of every mute and suffering claimant !  
He did not ask for even gratitude ; —  
The blessed consciousness of doing good  
Was his sufficient payment.

The warrior-chief who wades through blood to fame,  
May gather gory laurels round his name, —

But this brave heart, unstained by vain ambition,  
Won loftier glory ; all just souls will hold  
More dear than gems, more precious than fine gold,  
His memory and his mission.

Sweet be his rest, now all his work is done ! —  
May every loving mother bid her son

Learn mercy from this kindest of teachers, —  
This hero, who, until his lifetime's end,  
Labored to shield, to comfort, and befriend  
All dumb and helpless creatures.

## A TORNADO

**A**LL night a wandering air  
Went groping along the gloom,  
Sighing as in despair  
A portent of death and doom.

When sadly the morning rose,  
Thick vapors hung low and dun, —  
The air was heavy and close ;  
There was neither breeze nor sun.

Vast clouds, in a purple mass,  
In the darkened west were seen ;  
The centre was hued like brass,  
And the edge was of ominous green.

Pale faces stared at the sky,  
And foreheads grew damp with dread ;  
Where should they hide or fly ?  
And stout hearts sank like lead.

Dumb terror, with iron grasp,  
Laid hold upon great and small ;  
The grasshopper ceased to rasp,  
The lizard hid in the wall.

The toad came out of his chink  
And sat in the growing gloom ;  
The butterfly left the pink,  
And the bee the clover-bloom.

The worm slipped out of the ground  
And stretched on the path at will,  
Unscared by a footstep's sound,  
Unfeared of the red-breast's bill.

## A Tornado

The river lay still as glass,  
As waiting for what should come ;  
The swallows skimmed close to the grass,  
And the crows in the swamp were dumb.

The children paused in their plays,  
And huddled inside the door ;  
The oxen forgot to graze,  
And the woodpecker drummed no more.

In his clump of roadside fern  
The cricket had ceased to shrill,  
And the katy-did to turn  
Her halting and rusty mill.

No longer was heard the sound  
Of the swift wasp speeding by,  
Nor the ringing round-and-round  
Of the hidden harvest-fly.

The cows stood mute in the lane,  
The clock ticked loud in the room,  
The fly hung dull on the pane,  
And the spider paused at her loom.

The sheep grouped under the hill,  
And waited in silent fear ;  
The birds in the trees were still,  
And the silence pained the ear.



Suddenly came a wail,  
A moan like a soul in pain,  
And then — the roar of the gale,  
And the rush and smite of rain.

The prince of the powers of the air  
Swooped down like a bird of prey ;  
The lightning's terrible flare  
Seemed burning the heavens away.

The orchards were stripped and thinned  
As the hurricane howled in scorn ;  
Like dust in the teeth of the wind  
Fled the ranks of the standing corn.

And men grew white to the lips  
As the tempest shrieked amain,  
While the houses rocked like ships,  
And forests were mown like grain.

Fair villages, rent and riven,  
Lay flattened along the plain ;  
Crushed sufferers cried to heaven  
From their living graves of pain, —

And now that the ruin was done,  
And sated the wrath of fate,  
The storm went down with the sun,  
And the land lay desolate.

## Aunt Lyd

And the moon came out of her cave  
With a face of ashy gray,  
And gloomed like a soul in the grave  
Before it has found its way.

### AUNT LYD

♦ **I**N a small village, far from city noise,  
By winter snow or summer green half-hid,  
She lived, as lone as ever hermit did —  
A faded woman, known to graceless boys  
And even to kinder spirits, as “Aunt Lyd.”

Remote from neighbors, on the county road,  
The small bare dwelling of Aunt Lydia stood,  
Sheltered from north winds by a dense pine wood ;  
A poor, forbidding, comfortless abode  
For one so inoffensive and so good.

The county road — a path for horses' feet —  
Two wheel-worn lines, — two strips of grass  
between  
The path and lines, — flat grass, of dusty green, —  
And so the road went on and on, to meet  
The dim far woods, and lost itself unseen.

Humble her dwelling was, and scant of room ;  
The chimney built of stone, and topped with brick ;

She earned it, every beam, and nail, and stick,  
By ill-paid toil at spinning-wheel and loom,—  
Knitting, sometimes, and caring for the sick.

It makes my heart ache to recall the lone  
Long years of labor, patient, silent, meek,  
By which, while ever thinner grew her cheek,  
She made that frugal dwelling-place her own —  
Her utmost earning, four-and-six a week.

Ugly and cheap it was, without a trace  
Of paint outside or in; no sheltering blind,  
No pleasant porch — no glimpse of taste refined,  
Or that trim comfort, cosiness, and grace  
So precious to the heart of womankind.

“Even this,” she said, “is better than the doom  
Of many a lonely woman, who can make  
No simplest roof her own — and so must take  
A half-grudged living in another’s home,  
And drudge unpaid, though heart and sinew ache.”

There was no gate nor fence; the short smooth  
grass  
Grew from the road up to the unwrought stone  
That was her door-step. Pathway there was none,  
So seldom in and out did footsteps pass,  
For in her tiny house she dwelt alone.

Aunt Lydia

Sometimes, perchance, she coaxed a neighbor's child  
To stay the night. Ah! how I used to dread  
The strange, still room, the high, old-fashioned bed!  
People the dark with fancies grim and wild,  
And watch through wakeful hours for morning's  
red!

It was so still there! Scarce the village dogs  
Barked loud enough at night for us to hear;  
Seldom the sound of hoofs and wheels came near;  
The dreary monotone of croaking frogs  
Or wailing wind was all that reached the ear.

Queer pewter platters graced her cupboard-shelves,  
Quaint round-bowled pewter spoons, and basins  
bright;  
I gazed at them with mingled awe and fright,  
As we odd comrades sat there by ourselves  
Wearing away the hours of candle-light.

They were so different from the things I knew  
At home, — they had a weird, mysterious air,  
And blinked so, in the firelight's fitful glare; —  
And scarce less foreign seemed the white-and-blue  
Plates, cups and bowls of willow-patterned ware.

Sometimes, to cheat the long lone evenings,  
And entertain her small half-homesick guest,  
She took from out a deep, old-fashioned chest,

With reverent hands, the few poor precious things  
Left from the days when life was at its best.

Coverlets, thick with intricate design,  
Towels of home-made tow-and-linen twill,  
All spun and woven by her own deft skill ;  
With stores of bed and table linen fine,  
Bleached snow-white by long use, but perfect still.

There lay a curious India-cotton gown,  
A camlet cloak, and queer prunella shoes ;  
A dress of bombazine, too nice to use  
Excepting on some gala-day in town,  
Or on a Sunday, in the poor folks' pews.

Sometimes she put aside her buzzing wheel,  
And in a rush-seat rocker, creaking low,  
She sat and wound a skein, or carded tow,  
Or plied her knitting-needles' shining steel,  
And told me stories of her long ago.

I see her now ; a string of golden beads  
By day and night about her neck she wore, —  
The one small luxury for which she bore  
With much privation, many bitter needs, —  
Because it held her to the days of yore.

She had been fair in early womanhood  
They said, but youth and bloom had faded now ;

Aunt Lyd

Incessant toil had made her shoulders bow,  
But still she labored for her simple food  
And kept from starving, though one scarce saw how.

And there was still a trace of beauty left  
On her white brow, and in her soft eyes, crowned  
With lids like Juno's; still her throat was round,  
And still her delicate, pointed chin was cleft  
By a deep dimple, youth's last vantage-ground.

All summer, with her basket on her arm,  
When she could find no other work to do,  
She searched for berries, field and pasture through,  
And found them plenty, by some hidden charm,  
When others scoured the ground and called them  
few.

All winter might the pausing passer-by  
Perceive the busy murmur of her wheel,  
Or catch the sharp click of her swift clock-reel,—  
Or see her knitting so industriously  
She scarcely seemed to stop for sleep or meal.

She labored thus for years. At last there came  
A time when she could work and earn no more;  
The heedless grass grew tall before her door,—  
She sat within, and nursed life's feeble flame  
As best she could, alone, and sick, and poor.

Only a pitying child sometimes ran down  
The lonesome road, her fading fire to stir,  
Or fill her pitcher at the spring for her,  
Until at last, the fathers of the town, —  
Thrifty, and fearful of expense they were —

Seeing that for this sad forsaken soul  
— Although so long their helper she had been —  
No Christian in the village cared a pin, —  
Sold all her small effects — a pitiful whole —  
And the town poor-house yawned, and took her in.

She had borne much — but this she could not bear ;  
She had so prized her independent name !  
Her patient heart broke with the bitter shame —  
Her reason failed. The poor-house grim and square  
Yawned once again, and forth her funeral came.

Men, by one-half her thrift and industry,  
Whose lives are not, like hers, a spotless page,  
May live in plenty, and provide for age ;  
But after years of toil and poverty,  
A pauper's grave was all her heritage !

Nor was she fated thus because a doubt  
Had touched her name — for there had never been  
A breath against her piety ; no sin

Aunt Lyd

Had stained her. But the whole world left her out ;  
Doubtless heaven's gentlest angels let her in.

Her life had been transparent as the day ;  
She was a Christian, true as gold refined ;  
She served her God with humble heart and mind,  
And did whatever in her power lay  
To help, and cheer, and elevate her kind.

What was her crime, then ? She was no man's wife,  
Nor slave, nor plaything. She had scorned to wed  
For name and place. She had inherited  
No man's possessions. All her blameless life  
She bore the brand "old maid." And all is said.

Her bed is close beside the poor-farm wall ;  
Her sorrows in a pauper's grave are hid,  
Her name, and all that she endured and did ;  
And only I, of all the world, recall  
With tears the miseries of poor Aunt Lyd.

Too proud and pure to sell herself for gold,  
Too true to marry for mere clothes and food,  
How many a sad soul finds her womanhood  
Toil in her youth, and want when she is old,  
And always, chill neglect and solitude !



ONLY FRIENDS

(VILLANELLE)

|| HAVE only been your friend —  
Let me go, while yet 'tis light;  
All such comradeships must end.

No close, vital ties will rend  
When I pass beyond your sight;  
I have only been your friend.

Yet you knew you could depend  
On my truth, by day or night;  
All such comradeships must end.

I have never tried to bend  
All your life to my small might;  
I have only been your friend.

Ah, 'tis hard to comprehend  
Why, in kindred souls' despite,  
All such comradeships must end!

Kiss me once, ere fate descend —  
Kiss me once, and say good night!  
I have only been your friend —  
All such comradeships must end!

JAMES GATES PERCIVAL

**F**OY, balm, and sunshine must have blest the air,  
And birds, and many a bright belated flower  
Made dear New England's hills more dear  
and fair

Even than now, — when, one September hour,  
Sweet Heaven, in pity for earth's dreary dole,  
Gave to its need that pure and radiant soul.

Ah, never dwelt on earth a gentler heart  
Than warmed his bosom ; in his limpid mind  
Earth's sordid, low ambitions had no part ;  
Sweet visions and high thoughts were there en-  
shrined

Pure as an infant's, waking or in dreams,  
Even as the crystal of his native streams.

Rare and most sensitive singer ! few were they  
Could prize thee at thy worth ; such souls as thine  
In loneliness must pine their lives away ;  
Vain are the laurels tender hands would twine  
About thy grave to-day. Ah, bitter fate !  
Love brings her crown a hundred years too late !

Justice and love were both denied to thee,  
And fortune frowns on poets, — who knows why ?  
Men valued not the soul they could not see,  
Even women failed to know a god passed by ;

## An Awaited Guest

So, silent under cold and alien eyes,  
Girding thy pride about thee garment-wise,

And claiming not what was refused to thee,  
Thou walkedst on thy desolate way alone,  
Eating the bitter bread of poverty ;

Still, sometimes, with a sweetness all thine own,  
Pouring rare music, learned from loftier spheres,  
Even as a nightingale, on sleeping ears.

Rest sweetly ! thou didst know unrest so long !

Could our remorseful sorrow be expressed  
In flowers to deck thy grave and weep thy wrong,

Violets should spring in myriads on thy breast,  
And, dropping dew-tears for thy cruel doom,  
Lave thy neglected bed with purple bloom !

## AN AWAITED GUEST

**W**HY shiver at the thought that those long  
dead  
May come at midnight from the misty  
coast

Whereon no mortal, till he join the host  
Of disembodied souls, can ever tread ?  
What could there be to fear, avoid, or dread,  
If the dear angel whom I dream of most,  
Should ask to leave awhile her heavenly post

## A Wind-blown Leaf

And come to watch beside my sleepless bed ?  
Why should I tremble, shrink, or hide my head  
From that best, tenderest friend who first engrossed  
My childish heart ? I should be glad instead,  
O long-lost, girlish mother ! Well thou know'st  
How often, longingly, my soul has said,  
“ Dawn on my loneliness, thou blessed ghost ! ”

### A WIND-BLOWN LEAF

**T**HE dead leaves blow across the snow,  
But whence they come or where they go  
No eye perceives ; no mortal grieves  
Above the fate of wind-blown leaves.

So I am blown, unmarked, unknown,  
Across the world, from zone to zone ;  
No fond eye's ray beams on my way,  
Or greets me where I go or stay.

Ah, wind-tossed leaf, your woe is brief —  
You do not suffer years of grief ;  
But I, unblest, with longing breast  
Yearn toward my still-receding rest !

A VACANT LOT

◆ **I**N the heart of the city, though strange it be,  
Is a vacant lot, with a locust tree ;  
On three sides bounded by blind brick wall, —  
Yet there the rain and the sunlight fall,  
And the clover grows, and the breath it yields  
Makes aliens dream of the woods and fields  
They loved in the seasons far and fair,  
Ere life grew dusty with work and care.

The locust tree it is broad and tall,  
With graceful branches which lift and fall  
As the wind comes by, and a moment plays  
Like a merry child, with the limber sprays ;  
The wise tree knows what its whispers mean  
And shakes the dust from its garments green,  
And keeps its beauty and healthy prime  
Unsmirched by the city's smoke and grime.

In longest days when the sun is hot  
A quaker-grasshopper finds the spot  
(Whence he enters, or where he goes,  
Not a soul in the city knows,)  
Brings his viol, and all the noon  
Plays his sultriest harvest-tune,  
Such as always his kindred play  
When the farmers are making hay

## A Vacant Lot

In lush, warm meadows all rich and sweet  
With windrows wilting under the heat,  
Where wet-faced workmen, alert and blithe  
With ringing rifle and swishing scythe,  
Cut the grass, while a few apart  
Burden and bury the ox-drawn cart  
With fragrant heaps that were earlier mowed,  
And girls rake after the moving load.

The grass grows thick there, and near the wall  
In one damp corner, the weeds wax tall,  
And there a lonely, reflective toad  
Has fixed his cool and obscure abode ;  
And often after the sun has set,  
And the dews condense, and the leaves are wet,  
He ventures out from his secret lair  
And sits awhile in the evening air,

Or waits till haply a heedless fly  
Or rash mosquito comes blundering by ;  
Or watches the firefly's mystic spark  
Dawning out of the humid dark ; —  
But far above him, securely high,  
It fades and flashes alternately,  
Floats and wavers, now bright, now dark,  
Across the roofs to the leafy park.

The owner reckons its price in gold, —  
A city lot, to be held or sold ;

Had He but Known He Was so Dear

But little he knows the precious worth  
To souls which pine in the city's dearth,  
Of this oasis of shade and sweets  
In the wide Sahara of dusty streets, —  
As, doomed to bondage without release,  
They bless the place for its hint of peace.

Ah, long may the dismal day recede  
When love of show or the grasp of greed  
Shall murder the tree and dig the land,  
And send the builders, with bricks and sand,  
To rear a splendid and costly pile  
To add to the city's mile on mile ;  
O rich man, spare for a while to me  
The vacant lot and the locust tree !

HAD HE BUT KNOWN HE WAS SO  
DEAR

(VILLANELLE)

**H**AD he but known he was so dear,  
Despite the calm, cool words I said,  
He had not left me lonely here !

He would have paused, and come more near,  
And bowed full low his comely head,  
Had he but known he was so dear !

The Author of "Harrington"

He would have whispered in my ear  
The truth that long ago I read;  
He had not left me lonely here.

Waiting in vain, alone and drear,  
My heart pines like a bird unfed;  
Had he but known he was so dear!

Had he but marked how grief and fear  
Drove from my cheek and lip the red,  
He had not left me lonely here!

Far in another hemisphere  
His feet in devious paths are led;  
Had he but known he was so dear  
He had not left me lonely here!

THE AUTHOR OF "HARRINGTON"

**W**HO, once he had beheld it, could forget  
In all succeeding time, that brilliant  
face?

Lit from within, like a young god's, and yet  
Leading all hearts by winning human grace;  
In all that captivates, and holds, and charms,  
A man of men, with frame and heart and mind  
Made to attract and elevate his kind—



Destined to rule by eloquence, not arms ;  
One loud clear call for freedom, right, and truth,  
Uttered by lips touched with prophetic fire,  
Gushed from his soul, fresh with the springs of  
youth,  
Like a new fountain, leaping high and higher, —  
A cry that voiced a race's woe and need  
Startling the hordes of selfishness and greed.

Out of his passionate words, as from strewn seeds,  
Came up, like leaves of healing for the wrongs  
Of his loved land, high thoughts, and righteous deeds,  
Nor ceased until they bloomed in triumph-songs.  
Now as above his grave the slow years roll,  
Only a few, — how few ! whose wound still bleeds,  
Remember that most rare and marvellous soul.

## THE WEAVER



SWEETER than the clover-bloom,  
And purer than the dew,  
She sat before the old-time loom  
And slid the shuttle through.

The warp was thin, the woof was fine,  
The web was smooth and white,  
And as it lengthened, line by line,  
Beneath her fingers light,

## The Weaver

She softly sang an ancient rhyme,  
A quaint old roundelay —  
“The web is life, the loom is time,  
The thread is every day.

“The fatal shuttle crosses fast,  
Again and yet again ;  
Ah, happy she whose web at last  
Shows neither knot nor stain !”

Beside her, one of stronger mould  
Mused while her shuttle sped, —  
Smiled on her fair head's curling gold,  
And watched the flying thread.

“O will you be my precious wife,”  
He said, “through bale and bliss ?  
And will you weave my web of life  
As smooth and fair as this ?

“The mingled fabric of my youth  
Has not been white, I know,  
But you, with faith, and love, and truth,  
Can make it pure as snow !”

She paused a moment in her song,  
“My web is fair to view,  
But had the reed been threaded wrong,  
I could not weave it true.

“ With fickle loves and falsest arts  
Do men deface their lives,  
Then bring their worn-out shreds of hearts  
To those they seek for wives ;

“ Their web of life all soiled and slit  
By follies vile and base,  
They ask a woman’s hand to fit  
The frayed threads into place.

“ With shame and sin in warp and weft,  
And knots in every part,  
What is it worth ? what is there left  
To win a woman’s heart ?

“ Alas ! your life, with stain and soil,  
Is yours, and yours alone —  
I keep mine white by prayer and toil ;  
Each soul must weave its own ! ”

And once again she sang her rhyme,  
Her quaint old roundelay —

“ The web is life, the loom is time,  
The thread is every day.

“ The fatal shuttle crosses fast,  
Again, and yet again ;  
Ah, happy he whose web at last  
Shows neither knot nor stain ! ”

AFTERWARD


**W**HO longs to be remembered? Who would  
crave  
The careless word, light praise, or down-  
right blame

That waits upon the mention of his name  
Who slumbers, voiceless, in a three-weeks' grave?

Oblivion were tenderer and more just;  
So, when I pass, give not a thought to me,  
But let wild sweet-brier's thorns and fragrancy  
Defend and hallow my forgotten dust.

AWAKING

AT SEVENTEEN

 **L**OVELY world! refreshed by sleep and night,  
I feel new life in every nerve and vein;  
Good-morrow youth, and breath, and joy, and  
light!  
How sweet it is to be awake again!

AT SEVENTY

Through the dull trance where soul and body lay,  
There steals a sense of weariness and pain —  
Ah, me! and must I face another day?  
Is this the same old tiresome world again?

A DISGUISED BLESSING

**D**DENSE black cloud rolled ominous up the west,  
Threatening and vast, and full of darkling ire,  
Seeming to hold within its swelling breast  
Thunder, and hail, and fire.

Down sank my heart in terror at the sight,  
Dreading the deafening crash, the fierce amaze  
Of the wide lightning, terrible and bright,  
With world-revealing blaze.

Dark and yet darker grew the threatening cloud,  
High and still higher rose its greatening form;  
Flocks huddled silent, and all nature bowed  
To meet the coming storm.

Birds hid themselves within the voiceless wood;  
The butterfly and bee forsook the bloom;  
Even the brook's light laughter seemed subdued  
By the prophetic gloom.

A breath of wind, not rude enough to make  
The sensitive waxen cumfrey-blossoms fall,  
Or cause the over-ripened rose to shake  
Its petals from the wall —

And then came down the blessing! Not in gleams  
Of separate drops, as when scant April shines,

## At Sunset

But pouring, plenteous, plashing silver streams  
In perpendicular lines.

How beautiful! The earth drank silently  
The sweet refreshing, craved so long in vain :  
No thunder crashed, — no lightning split the sky, —  
Only the voice of rain,

The headlong hurrying downfall of the shower,  
Was heard, — one wild, tumultuous, sweeping rush,  
Lessening by quick degrees in weight and power,  
And then, — a sudden hush, —

And lo! the clouds grew thin and rolled away,  
The darkness fled, the sunshine smiled again ;  
Refreshed, renewed, looked forth the lovely day  
“ Clear shining after rain.”

Courage, faint soul! even in the darkest hours  
Let not thy hope depart, thy trusting fail ;  
The blackest cloud may hold refreshing showers  
Instead of fire and hail.

## AT SUNSET

**I** KNOW how fair the sunset is to-night,  
I see its crimson tremble on the wall ;  
I know the western heaven is all alight,  
But in this prisoning room I lose it all.

For weary day on day — for days which seem  
Like years, have I lain fettered here, and bound,  
Lost in the mazes of a fever-dream,  
With every sense in dim delirium drowned.

The pattern of the paper on the wall,  
The titles of the books along the shelves,  
The carpet's woven garlands, one and all  
Weary my eyes as they repeat themselves.

Yet nature sends consoling, even here ;  
Pale faithful asters, true as love in death,  
Come from their autumn haunts with smiles of cheer,  
And sweet red clover wafts its healthful breath.

The gentian brings me, in its chalice blue  
Shut close and cool, a little of the sky ;  
The goldenrod resplendent through and through,  
Shakes out its yellow sunshine royally.

But all the freedom of the clouds and air,  
And all the glory of the earth and sea,  
The myriad charms which make the earth so fair  
And life so sweet, are shut away from me.

All that is fresh or cool on wave or land,  
Seems from my sense forevermore apart ;  
The flowers wither in my burning hand,  
And tremble with the tumult of my heart.

## The Heart's Desire

Not mine the glorious visions which unfold  
To saints who waver on life's slippery bound ;  
I catch no gleam from angels' crowns of gold,  
I hear no heavenly harp's melodious sound.

Ah, when these earthly conflicts, fierce and sharp,  
Are over, and life's tiresome story told,  
I can be glad without the joyful harp,  
And satisfied without the crown of gold.

So, if it be my time, let me depart ;  
My swath is mown, — my few poor sheaves are  
bound ;  
After the worker's hand has lost its art,  
Why should she stay ? Why cumber she the  
ground ?

### THE HEART'S DESIRE

**W**HO has had his heart's desire ?  
Tell me, all who toil and tire —  
Tell me, you whose lauded name  
Shines upon the list of fame ;  
You whose hoards of precious gold  
Scarce can be in thousands told ;  
You whose power rules royally  
Over leagues of land and sea, —



## The Heart's Desire

Have you found the loftiest goal  
Longed for by your secret soul ?  
Have you gained the one supreme  
Glory of your youthful dream ?

Glows one breast with vital fire  
That has won its heart's desire ?

Who has had his heart's desire ?  
Artist, with your soul on fire,  
Statesman, who with counsels wise  
Shapes a nation's destinies,  
Warrior, you whose deeds have made  
Half a continent afraid,  
Maid, whose beauty rare and sweet  
Brings all gazers to your feet,  
Sage, whose wisdom's stores comprise  
All the lore of centuries,  
Poet, with the witching lyre —  
Have you found your heart's desire ?

Though he seek through flood and fire,  
Who shall find his heart's desire ?

After years of search and care,  
Of denial and despair,  
Haply there may sometime come  
To your soul, so chilled and numb,

## The Heart's Desire

Some faint mockery of bliss  
Brightening your loneliness  
    With a false deluding joy,  
    As sometimes a novel toy  
Soothes a sick or hungry child  
From its tears awhile beguiled,  
    Though it knows the ache and pain  
    Surely will come back again —

So you felt it could but tire ;  
It was not your heart's desire !

On life's road of stones and mire  
Who shall find his heart's desire ?  
    That one joy, whose far-off flame  
    Is his being's end and aim,  
That one dearest wish, whose birth  
Made all else seem little worth —  
    Spur of youth and goal of prime,  
    Bright ideal of all time,  
Sweetest thing beneath the sun,  
Still elusive, still unwon —  
    Has it ever come to be  
    Sure, secure reality ?

Never, till the stars expire,  
Shall you have your heart's desire !

ANOTHER MAY

**H**OW strange it seems that when another May  
Makes the numb earth alive, the waters free,  
And sets the redbreast building in the tree,  
And calls the fruit-blooms out on every spray,  
I shall have laid forevermore away  
The dusty robes of this mortality,  
Now frayed and worn, and shall no longer see  
The gradual dawning of the summer day  
That has so many times delighted me ;  
And not a bluebird, squirrel, wren, or jay,  
Nay, not a flower, nor butterfly, nor bee  
Will miss me in the general roundelay ;  
Yet surely the remembering sea will say,  
“ Our mother had no fonder child than she.”

A BABY'S GRAVE

**H**ALF-HIDDEN by the prairie grass  
Beside the dreary, level road  
Where crawling emigrant-wagons pass  
To seek a new abode,

There lies a baby's grave, — so small  
A mother's loving arms might span  
Its little length, and clasp it all  
As only mothers can.

## A Baby's Grave

Some woman, with a heart full sore,  
    Slow journeying toward the homesick west,  
Here paused, to lay forevermore  
    Her baby from her breast.

Who knows what germ of latent might  
    Was blighted in this blighted flower ?  
He might have reached the topmost height  
    Of greatness, fame, or power ;

He might have grasped the helm of state,  
    And kept it free from rock and shoal ;  
He might have swayed the nation's fate  
    With strong and wise control.

His might have been the wondrous voice  
    The world has waited for, so long ;  
He might have made the lands rejoice  
    In strains of grandest song,

Unheard since Shakespeare's golden time ;  
    Or might have found the hidden key  
Of some strange power, some truth sublime,  
    Some marvellous mystery

For which the world now seeks in vain,  
    And must for ages wait, because  
Nature has formed no other brain  
    To read her subtler laws.

A Baby's Grave

Perhaps some boon of priceless worth,  
Some blessed help that thousands crave,  
Lies buried here from all the earth,  
Deep in this baby grave.

Ah, who may know what wondrous deeds,  
What truths unsolved, what good unwon,  
What unguessed gift for human needs,  
What mighty work undone,

What secrets, sought since earth was young,  
What possibilities untold,  
What dreams undreamed, what songs unsung,  
A baby's grave may hold!

But these vain musings had no part  
In that poor mother's anguish wild,  
Who only felt that all her heart  
Was left here with her child.

Take, stricken soul, though late it be,  
A stranger's pity for your pain;  
Poor mother, who will never see  
Your baby's grave again!

A FORGOTTEN POET

PAUSE by a sunken headstone,  
Mildewed, and sought by few,  
And a tear falls on its time-stains,  
For the dead I never knew.

His life was a sorrowful story,  
With little to charm or cheer,  
But he left a song behind him  
That all the world should hear.

Poor, unhonored, and friendless,  
He gave up the useless fight,  
Nor ever dreamed that a stranger  
Would mourn him, as I to-night.

Ah, me! when my life is over  
And faded to silentness,  
When my grave is nigh forgotten  
And hidden by weeds, like this,

I wonder if some kind spirit  
Will come, in the shadows dim,  
To give me a tear and blessing  
Like these I drop for him?

If so, — sweet friend, wherever  
Thy beautiful feet may stand,

## A Child Sweetheart

In the dull, tired ways about me,  
Or far in some lovelier land —

On the dim hills of the future,  
Where my own may never go,  
Or — alas, my utter blindness!  
Nearer than I may know —

O tender and loving angel,  
With light on thy lifted brow,  
O soul, who will hold me precious,  
Would I could find thee now!

### A CHILD SWEETHEART

**I** LOVED you from a babe, my sweet,  
And always hoped and planned  
When you should grow to womanhood,  
To win your dainty hand.  
If you had lived until my heart  
Its waiting tale could tell,  
You would have loved me well, my sweet,  
You would have loved me well!

You thought me old and grave, my sweet —  
Ah, me, you never knew  
My soul enshrined you, as a flower  
Enshrines a drop of dew ;

## The Little White One

You never dreamed the lonely heart  
That aches beside your bier,  
Held you so close and near, my sweet,  
Forever close and near.

'Tis but a little grave, my sweet,  
That hides you from my eyes,  
Yet all my hope of happiness  
Within it buried lies ;  
And I shall live by love unblest,  
By beauty unbeguiled,  
The bridegroom of a child, my sweet,  
The bridegroom of a child !

### THE LITTLE WHITE ONE

“ **M**Y kitties ! ” and the wee maid pressed  
Their fur against her cheek :  
“ See, this one is as black as jet,  
And this light gray is prettier yet ;  
This has a snow-spot on its breast,  
And this, a dappled streak.

“ This one in black-and-buff is dressed,  
But O,” she said, and sighed, —  
While great slow tears began to fall, —  
“ The one I loved the best of all,  
The dearest and the prettiest,  
The little white one, — died ! ”



## Under the Beating Rain

Ah, from how many a cherished nest  
Of human hopes and plans,  
Ambitions, friendships, loves, delights,  
The dearest dreams of days and nights,  
The brightest and the preciouslest  
Of woman's life or man's,

Some watching soul has missed the best;  
Some grieving heart has cried  
Over and over, sore bereft,  
Unmindful of the blessings left,  
"Ah, me, Fate snatched the loveliest!  
The little white one died!"

### UNDER THE BEATING RAIN

**U**NDER the beating rain  
The grass lies level and low,  
Where by the church-yard lane  
The green graves rise in a row;  
Little their tenants care  
How the night-storm pours amain;  
Sweet is the quiet there  
Under the beating rain.

Under the beating rain,  
When the midnight tempests roar,  
Dead hearts forget their pain  
In slumber, and grieve no more

## A Window-light

Because they have striven and sinned,  
Because they have toiled in vain, —  
Soothed by the sighing wind,  
Lulled by the beating rain.

Under the beating rain  
The soul's fierce fever cools ;  
The fires of heart and brain  
Are quenched in its crystal pools ;  
Past all penance and prayer,  
Past all peril and pain,  
How shall we rest from care  
Under the beating rain !

## A WINDOW-LIGHT



ONLY a little space apart  
Ah, how alien is heart from heart !

Yonder there where the woodlands lie  
Dense and heavy against the sky,  
Far away from the hurrying feet  
And rattling wheels of the village street,  
Punctual, constant, every night  
Shines the gleam of a window-light.

When the frost is on field and town  
Bright it burns as the dark shuts down ;

## A Window-light

When I muse in the summer eves,  
Still it twinkles, through trembling leaves ;  
Never once does its radiance clear  
Fail to shine, in the whole round year.

In my thought, as I brood alone,  
Kindly feelings have slowly grown  
For the stranger who every night  
Trims and kindles that faithful light,  
Never guessing that I, afar,  
Watch and welcome its friendly star.

Hearts may ache by that patient beam,  
Love may labor, or genius dream,  
Age sit silent, unloved and lone,  
Sickness languish, with toss and moan ;  
Haply children, in home's dear nest,  
Play awhile, ere they go to rest.

Ah, how strangely are neighboring souls  
Farther sundered than are the poles !  
Since we know not what bosoms bleed,  
Sick with solitude, woe, or need,  
Pining desolate, day by day,  
Only a lamplight's width away !

Burn, fair beacon ! thy faithful spark  
Sends a cheer through the gathering dark ;

## Another Year

Haply under its fireside shine,  
Some contemplative soul like mine,  
Seeing my glimmer against the sky,  
Gazes questioning, even as I!

Only so little space apart  
Ah, how alien is heart from heart!

### ANOTHER YEAR

“Bitter memories, which make  
The whole earth blasted for our sake.”

— ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

✦ I HAVE kept so closely beside you, dear,  
Season on season, year on year,  
Always present, in gloom and cheer,  
That all your life will be changed and drear  
When I am no longer here.

Our lives have flowed in a mingled stream;  
In the winter's storms, in the summer's beam,  
You have found me near; and you little deem  
How strange and altered the world will seem  
When I have become a dream.

A little while, after fate has drawn  
Its veil between us, and you live on  
Alone at eve and alone at dawn,  
Will all earth's beauty seem pale and wan  
Because I am lost and gone?

You will not miss me in noise and glare,  
In smiling throngs of the gay and fair,  
Nor in the crowd of the city, where  
Tumult and turbulence vex the air ;  
I was but an alien there.

■  
But when you gaze on the summer sea,  
Or watch the spring, as it tenderly  
Touches meadow and hill and tree,  
With gradual greenness — it cannot be  
But then you will think of me !

And when you muse in some quiet place  
Where green boughs mingle and interlace,  
Where wild flowers lavish their bloom and grace,  
And worldly turmoil has left no trace,  
Ah, then you will miss my face !

The very grasses your feet may tread,  
The clover blossoming white and red,  
The bird that warbles above your head,  
Will say, as clearly as words are said,  
“ She loved us, — and she is dead.”

And when at midnight you hear the rain  
Beating, beating, on roof and pane,  
And the wailing storm-wind's wild refrain,  
Then you will seek my hand again,  
Miss it, and seek in vain.

## Guiltless

A rainbow, shining in glory brief,  
The curling foam on a distant reef,  
A rosy sunrise, a wind-blown leaf,  
A field of daises, a golden sheaf,  
Will deepen your lonely grief.

Each trill of a wild-bird's melody,  
Each tint of sunset and sigh of sea,  
And gurgle of brook and hum of bee,  
Will be like a haunting ghost of me,  
Whose presence you cannot flee.

Alas! that memory thus should "make  
The whole earth blasted" for my poor sake!  
That leaf and blossom and sky and lake  
Should bid the past from its grave awake,  
And add to your heart's deep ache!

## GUILTLESS?

**S**O you are clear? You did not pluck the rose?  
You only trampled it in mud and mire,  
Beyond all purifying but of fire?  
You only added to its stains and woes?

You fancy you are not the sinning one?  
You did not seek and find it where it grew,  
And drink from its fresh heart the morning dew?  
You only crushed it after that was done?

## A Neglected Grave

You trod it when another cast it down?  
You did not even leave it where it lay,  
But stamped it deeper in the miry clay, —  
You did but do the same as all the town?

Ah! though of that he little recks or knows,  
The man who plucks the fruit of others' sin,  
Is equally participant therein;  
*You* spoiled and soiled and killed the hapless rose!

## A NEGLECTED GRAVE

**B**Y a patient search I found it —  
The grave of a man who died  
In the strength of his youthful manhood,  
In the prime of his lofty pride.

He had done with life's vain striving,  
Its praises and its scorn,  
And finished his strong endeavor  
Long years ere I was born.

By the good deeds left behind him,  
By the wrong he scorned to do,  
I know that his earnest spirit  
Was fearless and pure and true.

## A Neglected Grave

The work that he did so nobly  
Should have blessed his struggling days,  
Should have brought him peace and honor,  
And circled his brow with bays.

But the world is all ungrateful ;  
It slighted the good he wrought,  
And his name and his many sorrows  
Have faded from human thought.

His life was a battle with trials,  
Temptations, and bitter needs ;  
His grave lies nameless and sunken,  
A tangle of common weeds.

Even Nature forgets him,  
And spreads no charm above  
The rest of her fond disciple  
Who loved her with wondrous love.

Only a single flower  
Above him has tried to bloom,  
But choked by nettles, it withers, —  
A type of the sleeper's doom.

The struggle of brave ambition  
Unfavored by fortune's chance,  
Cramped down by the pitiless pressure  
Of cruelest circumstance.



## The Wayfaring Tree

But I treasure his name as sacred,  
His deeds as beyond my praise,  
And love him as not one loved him  
While he walked the world's rough ways.

Sleep sweetlier, uncrowned hero,  
For these warm, grateful tears,  
After the cold forgetting  
Of half a hundred years!

### THE WAYFARING TREE

**W**HERE the north woodlands are fragrant  
and dark,  
Sweet with the scents of moist mosses  
and bark,

Where the noon sunshine, subdued from its might,  
Falls in faint glimmers of emerald light —  
Where, after sunset, the shy hermit-thrush  
Pours his clear vesper-song, gush after gush;  
Noticed by few, but beloved by me,  
Grows the wild, beautiful Wayfaring Tree.

Many a song has been sung of the pine,  
Oak tree and sycamore, linden and vine,  
Many a poet has warbled the charm  
Owned by magnolia, and cedar, and palm;

## The Wayfaring Tree

Maple and apple tree, ivy and beech —  
All have been lauded in song and in speech,  
Yet has no minstrel, by mountain or sea,  
Sung of the beautiful Wayfaring Tree.

Beautiful shrub of the shadows, how fair  
Burst thy big leaf-buds in April's chill air,  
Then in late May, or in June's early time,  
Spread thy flat flowers in a milky-white cyme,  
Grouped like the Pleiades — some on the rim  
Starry and shining — some smaller and dim —  
Rounding to berries, first pale and then red,  
Then turning tenderest purple instead —  
All thy fair phases are lovely to me,  
Bashful and beautiful Wayfaring Tree !

Broad are thy leaves, with their mission of good,  
Widest and largest of all in the wood,  
Netted with hundreds of wandering veins,  
Traced as by fairies, with infinite pains ;  
Brown are thy branchlets with rich, rusty gold,  
Drooping thy limbs, as if kissing the mould ;  
Oft like the banian on tropical plain,  
Sending down rootlets, and sprouting again,  
Loving the earth that gives vigor to thee,  
Loyal and dutiful Wayfaring Tree !

Many a day in the summers gone by,  
When we went roving, my playmates and I,

## The Wayfaring Tree

Deep in the woods, far from farmhouse and road,  
Where the shy twin-flower made its abode,  
Where the rude breezes dared never invade,  
Where the fair fern-fronds grew tall in the shade,  
Spreading its broad leaves in solitude free,  
Found we the beautiful Wayfaring Tree.

Ah, with what lightness we bounded across  
Mouldering tree-trunks half-buried in moss, —  
Felt the wet sphagnum sink under our feet,  
Found the red box-berries, spicy and sweet,  
Gathered spring beauties, all pencilled with pink ;  
Then, warm and weary, and longing for drink,  
Seeking dense shades where we knew it would be,  
Borrowed a leaf of the Wayfaring Tree.

Bending its edges, and pinning them up  
With a slim grass-stem, we fashioned a cup  
Quaintly three-cornered, and ample to hold  
Draughts of delight — where the spring bubbled cold,  
Brimming and broadening into a brook,  
Ah, what sweet quaffs of refreshing we took !  
Goblet more dainty was never, I ween,  
Pressed by the lips of the elves or their queen ;  
Dear to all children, to memory and me  
Must be forever the Wayfaring Tree !

Beautiful child of the wilderness ! why  
Hast thou the name we remember thee by ?

“Being Dead, yet Speaketh”

Is it because thou hast thus from the first  
Helped the faint wayfarer, languid with thirst,  
Offering freely, unbought and unsold,  
Beaker more fitting than crystal or gold?  
Is it for that it was given to thee,  
Thy eerie name of the Wayfaring Tree?

“BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH”

“**D**EAREST, when I am gone my silent way,  
Grant me one boon,” implored the dying  
wife —

“Give this poor frame to fire, not slow decay,  
When it is done with life.

“Would that my heart which through life’s light and  
dark

Has been to you so faithful and so true,  
Might leave in my dead ashes one bright spark  
To show its love for you!”

And when the kindly fires were spent and cold,  
He saw, and smiled amid his sorrowing,  
In the white dust, one gleaming drop of gold —  
It was her wedding-ring!

THE BABY'S GUARDIAN

WHEN all the lilacs were in bloom  
One pleasant April day,  
Sleeping within a shaded room  
A new-born baby lay.

And while like an unrisen star,  
It slept, there entered at  
The nursery door, that stood ajar,  
A silent, cautious cat.

With eager look and eyes intent,  
And lifted, watchful head,  
He paused — then crossed the hearth and went  
Straight to the baby's bed.

He kissed her hand, her wrist, her face,  
So rosy, soft, and sweet,  
Then made himself a cosy place  
And lay down at her feet.

None knew the creature's home or name,  
And none could comprehend  
Why, from that moment, he became  
The baby's constant friend.

The Baby's Guardian

Beside her, always, was his place,  
And if she moaned in pain,  
He rubbed his cheek against her face  
Till she was still again.

When she was bathed, he stood beside  
With anxious carefulness,  
Keeping close watch ; and if she cried,  
Would mew in sheer distress.

His splendid tail, his satin skin,  
His proud and lordly size,  
His ears, so sensitive and thin,  
His topaz-yellow eyes

Made him admired by young and old  
And kindly cared for ; yet  
Not those who loved him most, made bold  
To treat him as a pet.

No grown-up meddler dared to stroke  
Or pat his silken side ;  
The tenderest coaxing only woke  
A growl of angry pride.

But—wherefore none could understand—  
Despite the mother's fears,  
He never scratched the baby hand  
That tweaked his patient ears.

## The Baby's Guardian

He would endure all things from her  
Without a hiss or wail,  
No matter how she mussed his fur  
Or pulled his silky tail.

And when, with crowing joy elate,  
The baby walked alone,  
He made her slow uncertain gait  
The measure of his own.

Then up and down the grassy plat  
Between the beds of flowers,  
The baby and her guardian cat  
Would roll and play for hours.

So, all the baby's lifetime through,  
He watched and tended her,  
Bearing whatever she might do  
With pleased and patient purr.

But when eighteen bright months had smiled  
Upon her shining head,  
An illness smote the lovely child;  
A week, and she was dead.

The poor cat licked the little face  
So waxen white and cold,  
Mewed, melancholy, round the place,  
And would not be consoled.

## Johnny Appleseed

And when the child was laid away  
    Beneath a graveyard mound,  
The cat was missed; and from that day  
    Could nevermore be found.

Whence did he come? what was his end?  
    All search and call were vain —  
The lovely baby's lifelong friend  
    Was never seen again.

### JOHNNY APPLESEED

**L**ET all unselfish spirits heed  
    The story of Johnny Appleseed.

He had another and prouder name  
In far New England, whence he came,  
But by this title, and this alone,  
Was the kindly wanderer loved and known  
In the simple hut of the pioneer  
On the lands of Penn, and the wild frontier  
Still farther west, where the red deer grazed,  
And fierce beasts crouched in the rocks' recess,  
Where never the settler's axe had blazed  
A path through the trackless wilderness —  
Where years of his later life were passed,  
And where he wearied and died at last,  
Whose life was lavished for others' needs,  
And sweet and fragrant with generous deeds.



## Johnny Appleseed

Born one day when the winds were still,  
In the listening shadow of Bunker Hill,  
In that tense summer of wild alarms,  
When outraged colonists flew to arms  
Against the might of the tyrant's hand, —  
He was twinned with his native land,  
That, when the horrors of war were done,  
Became the freest beneath the sun,  
And ere he had come to man's estate,  
Was prosperous, peaceful, and growing great.

Nature loved him, and made of him  
A gentle giant of powerful limb,  
Fleet and muscular, brave and strong,  
Like those immortal in tale and song,  
With more endurance and hardihood  
Than often falls to the lot of man,  
And heart aglow with the purest good  
In the rugged stock of the Puritan.

When he was a stripling, fancy-free,  
He fell in love with the Apple Tree;  
No nymph or goddess who sought escape  
From rude pursuit in another shape,  
As Daphne vanished, or Lotus fled  
From the fatal clutch of a lover dread —  
But the tree itself, as it lives and grows,  
With its lovely blossoms of white-and-rose,

## Johnny Appleseed

Its beauties and benefits manifold,  
And its gracious fruitage of red and gold ;  
Never could fairer sweetheart be,  
Than the beautiful, bountiful Apple Tree.

He loved it first in the early spring ;  
He heard the wind in its branches sing,  
And watched its buds, as they grew and grew  
In the fitful sunshine and chilly dew,  
Fuller and softer, till some bright morn,  
The whole wide glory of June was born —  
The wondrous splendor of pink and white  
As fair as sunrise, as sweet as light.  
Gently its blossoms swept his face,  
Thrilling him with their shy embrace,  
And as he listened, he seemed to hear  
Its fragrant breathing across his ear :

“ Welcome ! in you with joy I view  
    My worshipper and lover true,  
And you shall be brave knight for me,  
    The champion of the Apple Tree.  
Receive it now on cheek and brow,  
    The seal of our betrothal vow,  
This light caress ; now go, and bless  
    The borders of the wilderness  
Where never yet with trap or net  
    The white man hath his footstep set ;

In fertile dales and intervalles

By which the wild duck nests and sails,

Make homes for me, — and there shall be

Years hence, full many a fruitful tree

To bless and cheer the pioneer

Who builds his log-hewn dwelling near.

And not unknown nor lost, my own,

Shall be your toil ; time shall atone ;

As long years roll, some grateful soul

Shall keep your memory sweet and whole ;

The good you wrought be unforgot,

And many a waste, unvalued spot

Where brambles close, and no flower grows,

Shall blossom, blossom as the rose,

Each year anew, my lover true,

Because of you, — because of you !”

He heard, he heeded, and he obeyed —

And ever after, his life was made

One constant service of loyalty

To the beautiful, bountiful Apple Tree.

He haunted the primitive cider-mills

Among the Pennsylvanian hills,

Gathering thence for his future needs

Bushels and bushels of apple seeds ;

Sometimes he carried a well-filled sack

Miles and miles on his patient back —

## Johnny Appleseed

Sometimes was helped by a grateful steed  
That he had rescued from blows and need :  
And once a hunter his form descried  
Floating down the Ohio's tide  
With two canoes, from the Indians bought,  
And lashed together, with careful thought,  
Loaded and heaping with seed supplies  
For his scores of western nurseries.

Seeking for sunny and fertile spots,  
He planted them deftly in rows and plots,  
Drawing a circle of brush around  
To mark the edge of his chosen ground,  
That no chance trapper might tread and spoil  
The tender nurslings of all his toil.  
Fast they grew in the virgin soil,  
And after summers had come and flown,  
And slender seedlings to saplings grown,  
He chose the finest, with care and pride,  
And scattered and sold them far and wide,  
If that, indeed, could be counted sold  
Which brought so little of gain or gold,  
But outworn garments and broken shoes,  
Too poor for his debtors to keep or use ;  
These he took for his small reward,  
Patched and wore them, and thanked the Lord.

Oft to the poorest poor he gave  
The budding trees he had toiled to save,

Till many a hovel, small and low,  
Hid in billows of rosy snow,  
Bowered and buried in pink and white  
As soft as sunset, as fair as light ;  
The lovely garment that springtime brings  
Out of her beauty and fragrancy,  
To robe that fairest of growing things,  
The beautiful, bountiful Apple Tree.

And when sometimes, as he came their way,  
His wealthier patrons chose to pay,  
He saved their gold, and his store increased  
For the sore distresses of man and beast ;  
And pitiful, tender, and kind indeed  
Was the heart of Johnny Appleseed.

He shrank from causing a pang of pain  
To the smallest creature in nature's train ;  
Many a time in his wanderings wide  
He gathered round him, from every side,  
Poor farm-horses turned out to die  
After a lifetime of slavery ;  
Bought them shelter from rain and cold,  
And paid their keeping with hard-earned gold.  
Even for venomous things he cared, —  
The wasp that speared him was always spared,  
And even the stinging gnats that came  
And scorched themselves in his camp-fire's flame,

## Johnny Appleseed

When all alone in the midnight wood  
He lay in uttermost solitude, —  
As often for many a night he did, —  
He pitied, saying, “ Now Heaven forbid  
That I should make for my own delight,  
Here alone in the woods at night,  
A cruel bonfire to singe the wings  
And cause the anguish of innocent things.”  
And so he trampled the last faint spark,  
And fell asleep in the whispering dark.

One winter night when the snow lay wide,  
He lighted his evening fire beside  
The hollow butt of a fallen tree  
That offered him snug security ;  
But seeing, close in their hiding there,  
Two baby cubs and a mother-bear,  
He quenched the coals with remorseless tread.  
“ The bedroom is yours, my friends,” he said,  
“ You found it first, and I have no right  
To turn you out in the bitter night.”  
And so, at the long log’s farthest end  
He couched, unseen by his ursine friend,  
Who still asleep with her children lay  
When morning called him to go his way.

Oft when the settler’s harvest failed,  
When late frosts blighted, or drought prevailed,

## Johnny Appleseed

Or sickness smote him with anguish sore,  
And grim Want threatened beside his door,  
Then like an angel of tenderness  
To help and comfort, to cheer and bless,  
With herbs of healing, and needed food,  
Out of the trackless solitude  
A true consoler, a friend in need,  
Came generous Johnny Appleseed.

Much he mused, in his journeys wide,  
On the dreamy doctrines of Sweden's seer ;  
Quoted his sayings on every side,  
And scattered his volumes far and near ;  
Yet no harsh bigot of code or creed  
Was liberal Johnny Appleseed.  
He gave no pledges to church or school,  
But lived and died by the simple rule  
To reverence body and mind and soul,  
And keep them innocent, pure, and whole,  
And earn a peace that is known to few  
By merely doing the best he knew.

Spending little and caring less  
For common comforts of food and dress,  
Reckoning luxuries only vain,  
And never eager for worldly gain,  
He lived a lonesome and errant life ;  
No cosy fireside, no child or wife

## Johnny Appleseed

Was ever his ; he had vowed to be  
True to his first love, the Apple Tree.  
Barefoot often, in summer days,  
He walked for miles in the briery ways,  
To plant the seeds that he held so dear,  
Or note the growth of a former year ;  
Sometimes, when burdened and wearied sore,  
He slept at night on a settler's floor,  
But never once for his humble bed  
Were pillows rounded, or soft quilts spread.  
Oftener far he spent the night  
Far from all human sound and sight,  
His pillow the leaves, with dew-beads wet,  
And the starry sky his coverlet.

Patient he toiled for many a year  
Thus in his self-allotted sphere ;  
Blameless and gentle, day on day,  
Laughed at, pitied, or held in scorn  
As one who frittered his life away,  
Without a promise of thanks or pay,  
For future settlers and babes unborn.  
And when his wandering work was done,  
His long, sore journey in snow and sun,  
He sank to slumber serene and calm,  
Like a loving child on its mother's arm,  
Trusting wholly, without a fear,  
The great true Heart he had lived so near.



## Johnny Appleseed

And when for years he had lain at rest  
Who knows where ? in the earth's kind breast,  
Every autumn a bounteous store  
Of apples, crimson, and green, and gold,  
The orchard vales of Ohio bore ;  
Fairer never were bought or sold ;  
But little did those who ate them, heed  
The long devotion, the toil and pain  
Of him who labored in wind and rain,  
In sore discomfort and frequent need,  
To plant the orchards for strangers' gain.  
Lightly valued while he was here,  
And little mourned when he went away,  
Was he, that spirit so wild and free,  
That lover and friend of the Apple Tree ;  
But by this story made known and dear  
To many a tender heart to-day,  
That soul untainted by selfish greed,  
Whose casket was Johnny Appleseed.

And never more will the Apple Tree,  
With all its beauty and fragrancly,  
Have lover so loyal and wholly true  
As this dear comrade whom once she knew ;  
For such devotion doth no man know  
As led this lover, through mire and snow,  
Danger and darkness, chill and heat,  
Oft with blistered or bleeding feet,

## In London Streets

To do the bidding, whate'er befell,  
Of the lovely mistress he served so well.  
Precious indeed must his memory be  
To the beautiful, bountiful Apple Tree!

Wherever his great heart ceased to beat,—  
Whether amid the shadows sweet  
Of the virgin forests, beloved so well,  
Or whether some village church's bell  
Knelt his passing, — I only trust  
That every June, o'er his sacred dust,  
Drift fair windrows of fallen bloom,  
Breathing freshness and sweet perfume;  
Daintiest petals of pink and white,  
As soft as sunset, as pure as light,  
The grateful tribute of memory  
From the beautiful, bountiful Apple Tree!

## IN LONDON STREETS

**D**O you hear the bitter wailing, do you hear it,  
O my brothers,  
Of the lost, dishonored spirits in these Babel  
streets who roam,  
Some of them scarce more than children, who should  
be by tender mothers  
Kissed to maiden rest at nightfall, in the sheltering  
nest of home?

Not alone from mighty London — from all cities of  
the nation —

Rises up to heaven in secret their exceeding bitter  
cry ;

Shall they shriek it in the highways? Nay, for that  
way lies starvation,

And they do not dare to die !

Tell me, is it any wonder that they crowd where wine-  
cups redden,

And a penny buys oblivion, drowning self-contempt  
and blame ?

That they quaff the maddening goblet, seeking thus to  
dull and deaden

Sharpest dagger-thrusts of conscience, and the sting-  
ing tooth of shame ?

Held from innocence and purity by bonds more strong  
than iron,

By a wall of fire divided from true woman's touch  
and tone,

None but men may hear or heed them: is there mercy  
in a lion ?

Is there pity in a stone ?

Ruined in their very childhood, — far more sinned  
against than sinning, —

Blighted by man's selfish passion, barred from every  
Christian door,

In London Streets

Lost, undone, betrayed forever in their womanhood's  
beginning,

They are left forlorn, while famine stalks behind  
and shame before.

See them waiting in the shadows, many of them  
fairer, younger

Than the sweet and cherished daughters whom you  
left at home to-night ;

Poor lost children ! but how many *men* would die of  
cold and hunger,

To preserve their virtue white ?

Who can tell what fierce fate drove them to the  
haunts where Satan hovers —

These, who should have dwelt as priestesses by  
sacred household fires ?

Were they robbed of woman's birthright by the lies of  
trusted lovers ?

Forced from homes of want and hunger by the  
blows of drunken sires ?

Lured by tales of well-paid labor yielding honest food  
and raiment,

Then left penniless and homeless, with no friend  
to take them in ?

Can *you* blame them, you who offer virtuous toil so  
meagre payment,

And give princely wage for sin ?

“Happy?” say you? gay, light-hearted, these who  
earn their bread by smiling?

Ah, that lying mask of laughter, it is worn at cruel  
cost!

Ah, the stinging of the serpent under all that bright  
beguiling!

Ah, the hours of fierce self-scourging, and the groan,  
“Forever lost!”

Daily food, however bitter, must be earned; and so  
their faces

Must be made to beam and dimple, to look happy  
and serene,

Though they long to rend their garments in the streets  
and market-places,

Crying out, “Unclean — unclean!”

Shall they shout this awful anguish, this despair beyond  
the telling,

To the cowards who condemn them, after buying  
what they sell?

Shall a vender spurn his patron? or shall those who  
live by selling

Utter, “Buy not what I offer — lo, my steps take  
hold on hell!”

Shall they ask *your* aid and pity, you who spoil their  
youth and beauty,

You who reap your lawless pleasure from their des-  
perate need and fear?

In London Streets

Shall they plead with *you* to help them back to right,  
and peace, and duty ?

Does the python help the deer ?

Like lost lambs astray in winter in a wild of thorns  
and brambles

Are poor children cursed with beauty in a world  
of wicked men ;

Happily, they perish early, die like sheep in crowded  
shambles,

Die in what should be the blossom of a lovely youth,  
and *then* ?

Still from Britain's fairest daughters are their wretched  
ranks recruited,

Still, in London's open market, girlhood sells her  
soul for bread,

Till she sinks in death's dark whirlpool, while base  
man, no less polluted,

Heaps his sins upon her head.

Do you hear it, O my sisters, the despair that wails  
forever

From the lost souls wandering hopeless in the city's  
gloom and din ?

On their right hand lies starvation, or the cold and  
cruel river ;

On the left are food and shelter, proffered by dis-  
grace and sin ;


So between these horrors stumbling, in their woe, and  
guilt, and blindness,

To their shameful graves they hasten, flinging life's  
dishonor down.

God of purity and justice, look Thou down in pity-  
ing kindness

On the lost of London town!

### A FORGOTTEN GARDEN

 N an old farm between New England hills,  
There stands a rambling stretch of rough  
stone wall,

Once neatly chinked with fragments large and small,  
Now tumbling wide, as Time, the leveller, wills;

Near by, in nesting-time, the cat-birds call,  
And from his apple tree the mating redbreast trills.

There hardhack blooms, with rugged iron-weeds,  
The prickly raspberry-brier, that grows between,  
Broiders the gray rocks with its graceful green;  
Its coral fruit, that no bird seeks or needs

So near the grain-field spreads its yellowing sheen,  
Drops wasted in the grass, or dries to blackened seeds.

Yet, all neglected and unnoticed here

Among the happy weeds which seem to know

## A Forgotten Garden

No mower's scythe can touch them where they grow,  
Come up between the stones, year after year,  
A few poor garden flowers, which bloom and glow,  
Step-children of the soil, yet sweet and full of cheer.

A farmer's wife, whose sad life none may know,  
Planted a flower-plot here, the grandsires say,  
As some small solace in her dreary day,  
Spent in dull toil and hurrying to and fro,  
Tended and loved it through her tiresome stay,  
Then died and left it, more than fifty years ago.

The rose beloved of grandmother and child,  
The small, soft cinnamon rose, to roadsides known,  
Pink-edged and crimson-centred, holds its own ;  
And spite of parching drought, and snows high-piled,  
Spreading its sharp red briars at will, has grown  
In love with liberty, and so for years run wild.

Doubtless there throve sweet-basil by the wall,  
And marjoram, and blood-red hollyhocks ;  
Yonder, perhaps, a bordering line of box,  
And pinks breathed spice, and London-pride grew tall,  
With love-lies-bleeding, thrift, and four-o'clocks,  
And fragrant southern-wood — she knew and loved  
them all.

But still her roses and her wormwood grow,  
Bitter and sweet ; tall heads of crimson phlox



## A Forgotten Garden

Swing in the wind above the lichened rocks,  
And nod, and wave, and beckon to and fro,  
As still remembering: how their fealty mocks  
The human souls whose love forgot her long ago!

And since, no hand has planted root nor seed,  
Nor trained nor watered what she cherished then;  
Grass choked the flowers; the farmer's careless  
men  
Mowed all, without a thought's remorse or heed;  
These few poor stragglers, taking heart again,  
Helped by the friendly stones, defied his thrifty  
greed.

The gold she earned was scattered long ago;  
The children which she reared are gone or dead;  
The farmhouse echoes to an alien tread;  
Only these faithful things remain to show  
That once she lived, and taught their blooms to  
spread,  
And bear the dull neglect she early learned to know.

Poor ghost! I know how hard the yoke of fate  
Pressed on her slender neck and weary frame;  
Day after day, year after year, the same  
Hard constant service of the farmer's mate;  
Among the blooms which owned her gentle claim  
I mourn her sad, gray life — but fifty years too late

## Body and Soul

I take one bud as from her kindly hand,  
And yield a sigh of tenderest regret  
For her whose woes all other hearts forget ;  
And musing here where once she toiled and planned,  
Am glad her flowers are faithful to her yet :  
I tell her roses this ; they nod, and understand.

## BODY AND SOUL

THE Body said to the Soul,  
Over the fumes of the wine :  
“ Ah, lofty tenant of mine,  
You shall bow to my control,  
Yea, submit to my decree, —  
You shall have no gods but me ;  
And if I fail, alone,  
To make you all my own,  
Lo, I have masters three, —  
Pain, Passion, and Poverty, —  
Whose slave I am ; and through  
My bonds they shall conquer you,  
And bring your proud head low ;  
I say it, and I know ! ”

The Soul to the Body spake :  
“ My strength you can not break,  
Nor shame my noble birth  
By any chain of earth,

## Body and Soul

Nor make me turn aside  
From my invisible guide,  
Nor cease to seek and prize  
My mansion in the skies."

The Body said to the Soul :  
" Pain, like a burning coal,  
Shall scorch you on every side,  
Shall wither your force and pride ;  
Your days shall be long and drear,  
Your nights shall be full of fear ;  
And dread, and despair, and doubt  
Shall compass you round about,  
As month after month goes by,  
And still in his thrall you lie ;  
Like millstones the hours will roll,  
And grind out your strength, proud Soul ! "

The Soul to the Body replied :  
" I know they are hard to bide, —  
The terror, the gasp, the pang, —  
The agonized nerve's keen twang  
Stretched to its utmost strain ;  
The throb of the frenzied brain,  
Crashing asleep and awake ;  
The torture, the wrench, the ache,  
May wring me to weak complaint,  
May force me to groan and faint ;

## Body and Soul

They will fail of this one thing, —  
To make me own thee king ! ”

When Pain had wrought its will,  
The Soul stood smiling still.

The Body said to the Soul :  
“ Are you still unharmed and whole ?  
Lo, over your stubborn will  
A tyrant that does not kill,  
Yet a crueller tyrant, leans ;  
Do you know what Poverty means ?  
Then learn, ere the blow descends !  
It means the neglect of friends ;  
The open contempt of foes ;  
The scorn and disdain of those  
Whose reverence you should command,  
Whose kisses would soil your hand,  
Whose threshold would stain your feet ;  
Not only labor and heat,  
Not simply hunger and cold,  
Not merely the lack of gold,  
But the insolence of the base,  
Your love tossed back in your face ;  
Ambition thwarted and killed ;  
Hope baffled and unfulfilled ;  
The shutting you out from fame ;  
The slighting your well-earned name ;

The blind or averted eyes  
Of those whom you should despise ;  
The lack of all worldly place ;  
Derision, defeat, disgrace ;  
It means the bitterest sting  
That the outside world can bring ! ”

With a half-unconscious sigh  
The Soul said, patiently :  
“ Those are not friends who fail  
At the rising of the gale ;  
For the foes who would condemn  
I pity and smile at them ;  
The slights of the great and proud  
Are but as a passing cloud ;  
Even hunger is brief distress,  
And labor and cold are less ;  
I can yield the visions bright  
Which have cheered me day and night,  
Can toil in the mire and dust,  
Can yield even love, if I must,  
And still can be well content,  
So I am but innocent ;  
Can bear whatever must be,  
But you shall not conquer me ! ”

And after the test was done,  
The Soul shone like the sun.

## Body and Soul

To the Soul the Body said :  
“ Still crowned is that shining head ?  
Still boastful that stubborn will ?  
Lo, one who is mightier still  
Shall humble you, proud and brave !  
And make you my lowest slave ;  
But not by weapons of dread,  
Or anguish of heart or head ;  
There be those who smile at Pain ;  
Whom Poverty cannot chain ;  
But yet there is one, I trow,  
Can bring the strongest low !  
Lo, Passion shall seal your doom !  
Her fetters are wreaths of bloom, —  
Her pleadings are sweet as wine ;  
Her glances are half-divine ;  
What soul shall her power defy,  
My strongest and best ally ? ”

Ah, confident Soul, beware !  
The warrior who flies a snare  
Is wiser than he who waits  
To fight the resistless fates.  
Alas, for the high-born one !  
The days of his pride were done ;  
The strength that could vanquish Pain, —  
That Poverty pinched in vain,  
Ah, how was its boast laid low

## The Old-fashioned Churn

At last, by its fairest foe !  
Dissolved, like the wax by flame —  
Alas, for the bitter shame !  
For the bright Soul swerved and fell,  
And slipped on the verge of hell !

Who will not be dragged nor driven,  
May still be allured from heaven !

### THE OLD-FASHIONED CHURN

**A**LL who visit the farmhouse turn  
To look at the tall old-fashioned churn,  
Which stands in the milk-room corner  
there,

With upright dasher and rigid air,  
As if reviewing its bank account,  
Or reckoning up the vast amount  
Of golden butter, that first and last,  
Up from its creamy depths has passed —  
(For, as circling seasons rolled their rounds,  
Its product was measured by tons, not pounds ;)  
What goodly sums it has helped to earn,  
The old-time up-and-down churn !

Daily in summer, and thrice a week  
In the winter season, with patience meek,

## The Old-fashioned Churn

Through all the years of her married life,  
With weary shoulder and aching arm  
And muscles strained, did the farmer's wife —  
That wageless slave on a dairy-farm —  
Stand urging the dasher up and down,  
Churning the butter to send to town ;  
Sometimes for hours would the labor last,  
And the pitiless tyrant hold her fast,  
If the cream to butter refused to turn,  
In the old-time up-and-down churn.

In the long-past days when the churn was new,  
The hoops were black and the staves were blue,  
But years of scrubbing and scrupulous care  
Have worn its whole circumference bare, —  
And the dasher-handle she plied so much  
Is polished bright by her constant touch.  
Her spine might ache and her head might burn,  
'Twas all the same to the waiting churn ;  
Thrones might be shaken, and kings brought low,  
And wars and famines might come and go,  
The earth might pause in its onward way,  
But nothing could put off churning-day.  
The well-thumbed leaves of the dairy-book  
(The only book she could hope to learn)  
Tell how many tons of butter she took  
From the old-time up-and-down churn.



## The Old-fashioned Churn

Not only butter she made it yield,  
But stranger products its depths revealed  
(Like the magic saddle-bags of old,  
Of which, and their contents manifold,  
Is the quaint Arabian story told,  
Whose wonderful pockets used to hold  
Banquets and palaces, robes and gold);  
Her labor won from its fruitful deep  
Cows, and oxen, and calves, and sheep,  
Many to sell and many to keep;  
Acres of land and miles of fence,  
Thrift, prosperity, competence,  
Clothes and schooling for children ten,  
Barns for the harvest, wage for the men,  
Ploughs, and horses, and farm-machines,  
Ah, what a mine of ways and means!  
All these wonders she took in turn  
From the old-time up-and-down churn!

But ah, from nothing can nothing come,  
And every purchase demands its sum;  
Bought with a price was all the gold  
That out of its creamy richness rolled;  
The price was the beauty, the strength, the life,  
The body and soul of the farmer's wife;  
All these she gave to the hungry churn,  
To make it yield her its vast return.

## The Old-fashioned Churn

Alas! it swallowed — a yawning tomb,  
Her lip's fair freshness, her cheek's young bloom,  
Her charm of feature, her grace of limb,  
Her light lithe figure, so straight and trim,  
The buoyant strength of her spirit's wings,  
Her eager longing for higher things,  
For nobler purposes, loftier ends,  
For comradeship, and the love of friends,  
Her thirst for travel, for books, for art,  
Her growth and culture of mind and heart,  
Her youth, her laughter, her merry ways,  
The girlish charm of her bridal days,  
Her joy of bountiful motherhood,  
The time she craved for her prattling brood, —  
For pleasant strolls in the neighboring wood, —  
For rest, for study, for solitude ;  
All these, and many another good,  
She buried, as in a funeral urn,  
In the bottomless up-and-down churn !

Her toil is ended, — her churning done, —  
And what was the gain when all was won ?  
And where the payment, and whose the thanks ?  
A few more hundreds in bonds and banks,  
A few more acres of grass and corn,  
A few more flocks to be sold or shorn,  
A few more mortgages, deeds, and notes,  
A few more bushels of wheat and oats,

## The Last Clover-bloom

A few more worries and sordid cares,  
And seeds of discord for thankless heirs ;  
The praise of having lived the life  
Of a profitable and saving wife,  
From the frugal lips of the neighbors round,  
And an unmarked grave in the burying-ground !  
Alas, how little the prize appears,  
The fruit of the labor of fifty years !  
A pitiless tyrant, hard and stern,  
Was the old-time up-and-down churn !

Alas, no wonder it seems to know  
The whole long story of toil and woe,  
The while it is grimly standing there,  
With upright dasher and rigid air,  
That cruel spoiler of youth and prime,  
That fell devourer of life and time,  
Counting the wealth it has helped to earn —  
The old-time up-and-down churn !

### THE LAST CLOVER-BLOOM

**A**S down the winding path I went,  
Where now no leaf is on the tree,  
Where frost has touched the faded grass,  
And blighted all the greenery,  
One solitary clover-bloom  
Forlorn, yet brave, looked up at me,

## The Rail Fence

A lonesome, stunted, feeble flower, —  
And yet, — it had a bee !

So, though the chill November breeze,  
Among the rifled boughs made moan,  
And all the grieving park had lost  
The summer beauty it had known,  
And though the poor, pinched clover-bloom  
Was pale, neglected, and alone,  
Still, spite of all, it must have kept  
Some honey of its own.

Courage, faint heart, — though wide and dark,  
Alien and cold the world may be,  
Though summer friends and flowers are fled,  
And winter frowns on land and sea,  
Keep thou some strength and sweetness still,  
So sad hearts, wandering hungrily,  
Like this belated bee forlorn,  
May find some help in thee.

## THE RAIL FENCE

**T**HIS is the squirrel's own highway,  
This fence of slanting stakes and rails,  
Traversing, weather-stained and gray,  
New England's rocky hills and vales ;

## The Rail Fence

From right to left, from left to right,  
It keeps its many-elbowed line,  
This way and that, till lost to sight,  
A zigzag length of splintery pine.

In regions far from city crowds,  
Where earth her willing bounty yields —  
Where shadows of the sailing clouds  
Move slow across the clover fields ;  
Where through the distance faintly heard  
The low of herds, the flocks' soft bleat,  
With sigh of breeze and song of bird  
Make the sweet quiet still more sweet,

It skirts for miles the country road, —  
Three stripes of dust and two of grass, —  
Where teams crawl by with heavy load,  
And farm-boys whistle as they pass ;  
It runs by river, ledge, and mill,  
It bridges gully, ditch, and swale,  
It threads the wood and climbs the hill,  
This rambling boundary of the rail.

By many a farmhouse, weather-gray,  
Whose mossy shingles speak its date,  
With lilacs by the grassy way  
Down to the seldom-used front gate,

## The Rail Fence

With three lank poplars standing guard,  
Each summer thinning more and more,  
With apples drying in the yard,  
And milk-pails sunning by the door ;

Where orchard boughs droop heavily  
Beneath their gold-and-crimson load,  
Tempting the thirsty passer-by  
To stop and reach them from the road —  
Where sleek, full-uddered cows at night  
Come lowing to the pasture bars,  
While fireflies, with their gold-green light,  
Forestall the peeping of the stars ;

Where, far afield, the dooryard hens  
Behind their sultan gravely stalk,  
While, bold and boastful to his friends,  
Yet fearful of the fancied hawk,  
He scans the sky with sidewise watch,  
And scares his wives with false alarms —  
Its angles climb the hills, and notch  
The briery borders of the farms.

Within its sheltering elbows, crowd  
Safe from the scythe, the farmer's foes, —  
The blackberry-bramble's snowy cloud,  
And every weed the cornfield knows ;

## The Rail Fence

Strong witch-grass, pushing everywhere  
Its ineradicable root ;  
White ox-eye, with its brilliant stare,  
Yarrow, and dock, and white-man's-foot.

There stately mullein's golden wand  
Above its woolly leafage sways,  
And sumach freaks its fernlike frond  
With scarlet, in the frosty days  
When wild-birds seek its acid seeds,  
And starry asters light the gloom ;  
There tall pink spires of willow-weeds  
And rustling everlastings bloom.

It passes where the farmer's man,  
With slouching gait, but arm of might,  
Embrowned by many a summer's tan —  
Yoking the oxen, Buck and Bright,  
To harrow, plough, or gather stones,  
Goes forth at sunlight's earliest beam,  
With haw and gee in Stentor's tones  
Deafening his inoffensive team ;

Where springy hollows, seldom trod,  
Are moist in summer's dryest day —  
Where breadths of wet and mossy sod  
Are violet-purpled every May —

## The Rail Fence

Where bluets spread their tinted snow  
In one brief night-time freshly sprung,  
And with their spotted foliage, grow  
The yellow bells of adder's-tongue ;

Where, in the woods, the lazy stream,  
Its shallow bed half choked with reeds,  
Forgets its dance, and glint, and gleam,  
To loiter with the water-weeds ;  
Where treacherous bog and quagmire deep  
Forbid the strolling schoolboy's foot,  
And let the blueberry-bushes keep  
Unspoiled their azure-bloomy fruit.

It strides the slumberous swamp across,  
Where calamus and cat-tails grow,  
And in the soaked and spongy moss  
The delicate cranberry-blossoms blow —  
Where iris waves her banners blue,  
And, purple-veined, the huntsman's-cup,  
Half full of rain or garnered dew,  
Hides, lest the sun should drink it up.

Yet entrance to her moist retreat  
Kind nature does not quite refuse ;  
Firm bulrush-tussocks tempt the feet,  
Like stepping-stones across the ooze



## The Rail Fence

Where frogs are loud at early dark,  
And Jack-o'-lantern flits at night,  
And half-decayed and mouldering bark  
Shines with a weird and rayless light.

It passes where the cunning crow,  
Watching the planting of the corn,  
Waits, planning when the workmen go,  
To dine at ease, — with noisy scorn  
Of tattered garments, stuffed to show  
Some semblance of the form of man —  
But who shall cheat the keen-eyed crow?  
He laughs at laws, and breaks the ban.

Where fast-encroaching elders fill  
The stony edges of the fields,  
And the trim wax-wing feasts at will  
On the thin sweets their fruitage yields;  
Where wasteful raspberry-briers drop  
Among the rocks their coral fruit,  
And, loosened from the thistle-top,  
Sails its adventurous parachute;

Where, on the intervalles, the grain  
Is yellowing in the ripening heat,  
Or, later, in the autumn rain  
Stands the stiff stubble of the wheat —

## The Rail Fence

Where golden-rod on swinging stem  
Takes, day by day, a brighter tinge,  
And decks the frayed and faded hem  
Of summer with its golden fringe;

Where, under August's rainless sky  
The arid hillside basks and burns,  
It wanders, — where complainingly  
The tiny roadside streamlet turns  
The urchin's mimic water-wheel,  
Whittled by careful stealth, in school,  
Or floats his paper sail-boat's keel  
Upon its shallow, pebbly pool.

It roves where solemn sheep all day  
Crop scanty grass, content of soul,  
While thoughtless lambkins bound and play,  
Chasing each other round a knoll;  
Where heifers lift their gentle eyes  
To watch afar the speeding train,  
And clumsy calves, in mock surprise,  
Toss up their heads and plunge amain.

The lonesome colts at pasture lay  
Their necks across its topmost bar,  
And greet their kindred, far away,  
With tremulous whinny, echoing far;

## The Rail Fence

Or weary farm-horse, soberly  
    Out grazing for a holiday,  
Yeans toward some equine passer-by,  
    And wins, perchance, an answering neigh.

It passes by the pleasant wood  
    Where acorns grow, and beechnuts fall ;  
It bounds the deeper solitude  
    Where shyest wild-birds nest and call,  
Unscared by human voice or sound ;  
    Where dainty snow-berry creeps and thrives,  
Where rich, deep mosses spread the ground,  
    And twin-flowers spend their small sweet lives.

Where underneath the fadeless screen  
    Of fringy pine and fragrant fir,  
You find the spicy wintergreen  
    And hear the startled partridge whir ;  
Or note how wisely she deceives  
    The eye that peers her nest too near ;  
Or pluck, among the wet brown leaves,  
    The May-flower, sweetest of the year ;

Where, in the spring, the fragile fronds  
    Of feathery ferns are first unrolled ;  
Where lilies on the sleepy ponds  
    Lie lovely in their white-and-gold ;

## The Rail Fence

Where from the tallest hemlock's crown,  
The thrush's ringing notes descend, —  
The squirrel's road crooks up and down,  
His guide, his pastime, and his friend.

Along its top he nimbly goes  
Day after day, industriously,  
To fill, before the time of snows,  
His storehouse in the hollow tree ;  
Speeds from the cornfield to the woods,  
His round cheeks filled with nuts and grain,  
Adds his last theft of treasured goods,  
Then forth and back and forth again.

Yet wherefore theft ? The laws which give  
These wild things life, and varied powers,  
Give them as well the right to live,  
Aside from selfish claims of ours.  
Since insect, grub, and cut-worm share  
The earth's increase, in our despite,  
And even the ravens are His care,  
Who shall deny the squirrel's right ?

The chipmunk, with his chirping note,  
Darts swift along the zigzag rails ;  
The flying squirrel, that can float  
From tree to tree on furry sails —

From Afar

The nimble gray, with plummy tail,  
And brilliant eye a living gem,  
All use the causeway of the rail,  
And think it made alone for them.

Dear, too, it is to homesick souls  
Who from the city's bonds, look back  
To country shades, and lanes, and knolls,  
And trace again their childhood's track ;  
Who long to leave the tedious town,  
With all its tiresome turbulence,  
And, care-free, follow up and down  
The saunterings of an elbow-fence.

FROM AFAR

(FOR MUSIC)

**H**OW can I see, dear love, the unwelcome  
morning rise  
And bring the long, long day that must be  
lived alone ?

How can I watch the sun creep slowly up the skies,  
And know it will not find thee here, my own ?  
How can I wear away the weary day on day  
That must be labored through before we meet again ?  
How can I bear, dear love, the long and slow delay,  
The utter loneliness and silent pain ?

## Harvest Time

How can I see, dear love, the sunset shadows fall,  
And know that night and darkness will not bring  
thee home ?  
How can I watch the moon bring peace and rest to all  
Save me, who wait for one who does not come ?  
How can I face the dark with wide unsleeping eyes,  
And stretch my longing arms toward yon unanswer-  
ing sea ?  
O love, my love, where'er thy lonely pillow lies,  
Send from it one consoling thought to me !

### HARVEST TIME

“**A**LL precious things,” said one, “are slow of  
growth ;”

Dull carbon takes uncounted years of time  
To grow a diamond. Time and labor both  
Are needful to the soul's perfected prime.

The rich results of labor and of study  
Are reached when youth's wild tumults disappear ;  
The newly opened spring spouts thick and muddy,  
But afterward the steady stream flows clear.

The grape-vine has no clusters in the spring ;  
Its fruitage takes the whole long summer-time  
For daily growth and gradual ripening  
To perfect purple. In our youth, we climb

Through rainbow mists of promise and of hope ;  
But wider prospects and a clearer light  
Reward our labor, when the upward slope  
Is conquered, and we reach life's loftiest height.

The fair May moon is beautiful and bright,  
And lovers love the silver orb of June ;  
But how much richer is the golden light  
Poured from the broad and brilliant harvest moon !

The poet's laurels are not twined in May ;  
The sage's wreath is made of autumn flowers ;  
After life's summer tempests pass away  
Comes the full ripening of the soul's best powers.

Promise is sweet, but sweeter is fruition ;  
Seed-time, with all its hopes, has doubts and fears ;  
The golden sheaves of struggle and ambition  
Are seldom garnered till our later years.

“ Old wine to drink,” the ancient proverb saith,  
“ Old wood to light the hearth, old books to read,  
Old friends to lean upon,” whose love and faith  
Have never failed us in our time of need.

So let us call age ripeness, not decay,  
And deem that every furrow marks, in truth,  
Another stage upon the lessening way  
That leads us up to everlasting youth !

FIFTY YEARS

**H**LAS, how we strive and struggle  
With sinew and brain and pen,  
That we may be known and honored  
And kept in the thought of men !

We labor with brush and pigment,  
We model the plastic clay,  
We grapple the forces of nature,  
And bind them, and make them obey ;

We fashion us stately temples  
Whose turrets foretell the morn,  
To hold up our name and record  
To multitudes yet unborn ;

Or mining for thought's rich metal  
In study's dingiest nooks,  
We hammer it into language  
And spread it in flimsy books ;

And the rarest wine of our being  
We lavish, with toil and tears,  
That our deeds may be remembered  
In the rush and whirl of years ;



That the breath of worldly praising,  
Dear-bought by our wasted prime,  
May keep from our name and lineage  
The slow soft dust of time.

But, alas, what human bosom  
Our image or memory saves,  
When the weeds of fifty summers  
Have nodded above our graves ?

Why shrink from the fate that waits us ?  
Although we fade as a leaf,  
It is better to be forgotten  
Than balmed in a bitter grief ;

And better to be neglected  
In utter and dark eclipse,  
Than mentioned by careless voices,  
Or sneered at by envious lips.

So what if the heartless highway  
Effaces our nameless beds,  
And the surges of life and labor  
Roll over our peaceful heads,

Since neither, nor all together,  
Can trouble or break our rest, —  
For of all who toil and slumber,  
The dead man sleepeth best !

DEW-DROPS

**A** PERFECT and unclouded day  
Beams softly from the crystal blue;  
Clover and grasses stretch away  
Drenched with the trembling dew.

Even each tiniest spire of green  
Fringing the dusty road to town,  
Glad to be fair, although unseen,  
Has its own twinkling crown.

In every leaf's and flower's fold,  
Jewels of wondrous lustre shine,  
Kindling to hues and tints untold,  
Like brilliants from the mine.

Millions of diamonds shine and shake;  
No earthly monarch owns their peer;  
Oh, let no breeze from off the lake  
Play mischievously near!

Quietly breathe, O air of June,  
Rend not the dew-stars from their hold!  
Spare them awhile, for all too soon  
Their moments will be told!

Until the fervid noon shall come,  
Visit them softly, one and all;  
Wind of the west, be kind, be dumb —  
Exult not in their fall!

Yet vain are prayers, for while we sigh,  
Zephyr and sunshine drink them dry!

THE PASSING

**W**HEREFORE of death and dying have  
we wrought  
An image of such horror and affright  
That little children tremble at the thought  
And even wise men dread it day and night?

A thing so certainly a part of life  
And so inevitable to us all,  
Why do we couple it with mortal strife,  
And hedge it round with coffin, hearse, and pall?

If, when one's time comes, one could only pass  
As nature must have meant, — quite cheerfully,  
Under the open sky, upon the grass,  
With breeze and song, — how happy it would be!

## The Passing

But to be prisoned in a tiresome room  
    With all the earth's sweet scents and sounds shut  
        out,  
Full of half-whispers, tiptoeings, and gloom,  
    And all the dreadful sick-room signs about, —

With smothering curtains crowding out the light,  
    Even if the day be bright, the month be June,  
And always most offensively in sight  
    A tumbler, sundry vials, and a spoon.

A smooth, smug doctor lurking somewhere nigh  
    (Death's most detestable accessory),  
Scanning the scene with cool professional eye,  
    Yet full of simulated sympathy.

At last, one standing by will smooth my hair  
    And cross my limp hands, still a little warm,  
Upon my breast (I cannot bear them there),  
    And draw to long straight lines my nerveless form.

And say, "That she was saintly or devout,  
    Or even inclined that way, I never dreamed —  
And yet, how peacefully her life went out!  
    Perhaps she was more pious than she seemed.

“ See, do you notice her uncommon height ?  
She never seemed to me so tall before ;  
Well, she is sure of quiet sleep to-night — ”  
And they will tiptoe out and shut the door.

Oh, if kind fate would grant me when I die  
A bed of grass upon our Mother’s breast,  
With but her choir to sing my lullaby,  
And only leaves between me and the sky,  
How happily my soul would sink to rest !

### CIRCUMSTANCE

**S**HE said, “ O love, who somewhere seekest me,  
Haste I before, or linger I behind thee ? ”  
He said, “ O love, where shall I look for thee ?  
At home, or in the lands beyond the sea ?  
Ah, cruel love, who wilt not let me find thee ! ”

When others wooed her, seeking for a mate,  
Bringing her flower, and gem, and vow, and poem,  
Oft to herself she whispered, “ Cruel fate,  
This surely is not he for whom I wait —  
Among a thousand thousand I should know him ! ”

“ Art thou in some far foreign realm ? ” he said,  
“ That thus no patient search of mine reveals thee ? ”

Circumstance

Or dost thou walk the very paths I tread?  
And like the leaf that falls upon my head,  
Is it thy very nearness that conceals thee?"

Each crossed the ocean — in a different ship;  
Each, separate, gazed on storied vale and mountain;  
Heard the Venetian oars' light splash and dip;  
And each, with smiling and incredulous lip,  
Touched the bright foam of Trevi's moonlit fountain;

Walked dreamingly the fair Levantine strand;  
Plucked in green English lanes the starry daisies;  
Gathered forget-me-nots in Switzerland;  
Saw the great Sphinx stare wide across the sand,  
And wondered whom she waits, and why she gazes;

Then wandered back, the selfsame streets to pace,  
Heard the same church-bells call to one another;  
In friendly homes, in walk and market-place,  
Missing each other by a moment's space,  
Each soul alike unconscious of the other.

So never looked they in each other's eyes;  
By adverse destiny unkindly guided,  
They blindly groped, in our poor human wise,  
Cheating the years with dreams and fantasies,  
And lived their lives out, neighbors, but divided.

Alas, what doom were more disconsolate ?

To pine with vain, unsatisfied endeavor,  
Each spirit seeking blindly for its mate,  
True counterparts, but kept apart by fate,  
Until the hungry heart is stilled forever !

In neighboring graves, these hapless wanderers

Sleep well ; and through the summer's flowery glory  
The bees shall be their faithful messengers,  
To bear, between his quiet heart and hers,  
The tender words of love's belated story.

### BRAMHALL HILL

**T**HE wind sweeps cold along the lonesome height ;  
Of all the crowds who came  
When airs were warm and summer skies were  
bright,  
To see the sunset flame,

Not one is here ; the hill is mine alone ;  
The charms which summer lends  
The stretch of field and wave and wood are gone ;  
And with them, summer friends.

Yet, haunt beloved in long-past autumns bright,  
I seek and love thee still,  
And make my lonesome evening round, despite  
The wind's relentless will.

## Bramhall Hill

The sun's last light lies pallid in the west,  
By hurrying storm-clouds crossed ;  
The gleam that slants along the river's breast  
Is white and cold as frost.

Yet still upon the distant purple heights  
Lies one thin thread of gold,  
And now the evening star its lamp relights,  
Still brighter for the cold.

Of all the wayside sweets which summer knew,  
No flower or leaf is seen ;  
Only the melancholy pines are true,  
And keep their faithful green,

Even as I keep the precious memory  
Of those who long ago  
Watched with me here the changing sunset sky,  
And saw the eve-star glow.

While they, perchance, in home's enchanted land  
Muse by the hearth-fire's blaze,  
I haunt the windy hill-top, hand in hand  
With ghosts of other days.

Blow, bitter wind ! I know thy meaning well ;  
The winter's wrath will come,  
And all this breadth of meadow, slope, and dell  
Will lie entombed and dumb.



Oh, homesick heart! though winter threaten thee,  
 Despair not, unconsolèd;  
 The pines will keep their green,—the stars will be  
 Still brighter for the cold!

LONELINESS

**T**O roam alone the deep and trackless wood,  
 To worship nature in her fastnesses,  
 Her lovers know is blessed solitude,  
 Yet never think to call it loneliness.

To mix with crowds which throng the city ways  
 To whom we are but shadows, even less,  
 To join the brilliant throngs in pleasure's maze,  
 Yet be alone,—ah, that is loneliness!

To spend our days and waste our noblest powers,  
 Sit by the selfsame board, the selfsame fire,  
 With those whose hearts are not in tune with ours,  
 Who share with us no thought and no desire,—

Nor sympathy, nor hope, but stand aloof,  
 Deaf to our songs and blind to our distress,—  
 Strangers, though sheltered by the same home-roof,—  
 Ah, this indeed is utter loneliness!

THE HARBINGER

**E**RE yet warm clouds begin to brood  
Above the dull unfriended wood,  
While still in clefts and hollows low  
Lie patches of unmelted snow,  
Who hears the soft alluring word  
That summons back the exiled bird?  
Who heeds the mystic voice that calls  
The lichens out upon the walls,  
The mosses on the boulder's edge,  
The creeping growth along the ledge, —  
That all the winter-time hath lain  
Lifeless and dry, a rough dark stain  
Scarce rising from its parent stone,  
Biding its time, unmarked, unknown?

When the late winter rains begin,  
And streaks of pallid blue creep in  
Among the rifts of cloudy gray,  
The lichens wake, and day by day  
As spring steals nigh, half-glad, half-loath,  
They brighten into life and growth,  
And drape the barren rocks anew  
With clouds of rich and varied hue, —  
A robe of living velvet, fair  
With silken gleaming here and there,

Brightened by silverings manifold  
And many a touch of tawny gold,  
Deep mellow brown and vivid green,  
With every varying tint between.

The lichen has no brilliant bloom,  
Nor any breath of rare perfume ;  
Never above its bed hath whirred  
The honey-hunting humming-bird ;  
Nor moth nor bee about it soars  
In search of hidden nectar-stores ;  
No living thing of earth or air  
Doth for the lowly lichen care ;  
It spends its life unloved, unknown,  
Consoling the insensate stone ;  
Yet is its gradual brightening  
The first slow sign of coming spring,  
The first assurance, doubly blest,  
Of summer's brooding peace and rest.

To homesick souls which pine for spring,  
Its early slow awakening  
Is dearer and more welcome far  
Than summer's richest roses are,  
Since it foretells the joy, ere long,  
Of robin-call and bluebird-song,  
And how May's happy tears will wet  
The rock-pink and the violet,

## The Story of Thomas Fish

And how the crystal drops will shine  
On saxifrage and columbine,  
When this unkind and frowning sky  
Shall change and brighten, by and by,  
When warm winds blow, and soft rains fall,  
And warmth and light brood over all.

### THE STORY OF THOMAS FISH

(1784)



ORE than a hundred years ago,  
While Maine's sparse hamlets were scattered wide,  
And threatened still by the savage foe —  
Where the turbulent Androscoggin's tide  
In fetterless freedom flowed at will,  
Unspanned by bridge and untasked by mill,  
Unvexed, as it threaded the forest gloom,  
By floating lumber or hindering boom, —  
Across the ice, on a winter day,  
As thickly the dizzy snow came down,  
A traveller toiled on his tiresome way  
To New Port Royal from Winthrop town.

All day long it had snowed and snowed,  
And now the drifts were heavy and deep;  
For a score of miles he had kept the road,  
Almost lost in the tempest's sweep;

## The Story of Thomas Fish

But beating his hands to keep them warm,  
He faced, undaunted, the blustering storm,  
    For only a little space away  
    The end of his weary journey lay.  
But all too soon did the shadows fall  
    And the chill gray twilight leave the skies,  
And night let down, like a solid wall,  
    Its thick black curtain before his eyes.

With laboring muscles and straining sight,  
    He bent his head to the furious blast,  
And toiled and struggled with sturdy might,  
    And pictured the rest he should find at last —  
Blessing the way-marks which let him know  
The hidden pathway beneath the snow ;  
    Had he not walked it, in dark and light,  
    Often and often, before to-night ?  
But the mighty wind, from the bleak northeast,  
    Seized him, and smote him, and made him reel ;  
His feet grew numb, and their aching ceased,  
    And the sharp snow stung him like points of steel.

It beat like sand in his blinded eyes,  
    And filled his nostrils, and choked his breath,  
And the cold seemed slowly to paralyze  
    His brain to a drowsy dream of death.  
Plunging, stumbling, he rose once more,  
Deafened and dazed by the tempest's roar,

## The Story of Thomas Fish

And yet again through the drifts he pressed,  
With stiff hands beating his aching breast,  
And pulses faltering — while so near,  
Only a short half-mile before,  
Were warmth, and safety, and friendly cheer  
In the dwelling of Farmer Livermore.

The farmer's kitchen was broad and bright,  
And like a star in the driving storm  
Shone from its windows the ruddy light  
Of the generous hearth-fire wide and warm.  
The inmates shuddered beside the fire,  
As the raging tempest shrieked in ire,  
And the striving gusts in the chimney cried,  
While higher the snow-drifts heaped outside.  
When nine had rung from the tall old clock,  
The ashes over the coals were pressed,  
The door was fastened with bolt and lock,  
And the farmer's household sought their rest.

Long after fire and lights were out,  
And half-asleep as the farmer lay,  
He dreamed or fancied he heard a shout  
In the stormy tumult far away.  
Alert, he listened — and caught once more  
The voice half lost in the wind's wild roar, —  
Muffled, faint, on the snow-thick air  
It came, like the cry of a great despair ;

## The Story of Thomas Fish

And the farmer, leaving his pillow warm,  
Went out in the darkness, and strove to hear,  
In the fitful pauses of blast and storm,  
Again the call that had reached his ear.

Long he listened, but all in vain ;  
Never again came the pleading cry ;  
Over the clearing and wide pine plain  
The wrathful tempest swept howling by,  
And he turned again to the sheltering door,  
Doubting and querying more and more ;  
“ The night is terrible — who would be  
Out at a time like this,” said he,  
“ To face this bitter and bleak northeast ? ”  
As he crept once more to his slumbers warm ;  
“ It was but the cry of a scared wild beast  
Roused from its lair by the roaring storm.”

The wanderer's soul grew sick with fear ;  
He had lost the road ! and he struggled back  
Manfully, stoutly, — for life was dear, —  
Striving to find the baffling track ;  
But sore bewildered, half-frozen, blind,  
He crossed it, leaving it far behind, —  
Floundering, plunging, with slow advance,  
Away from his life's last feeble chance.  
What wonder, when from his heart was riven  
The precious hope he had tried to nurse,

## The Story of Thomas Fish

If he lost all faith in earth and heaven,  
And blamed his fate with a bitter curse ?

*Could* he be lost ? He had passed this way  
On many a wide exploring tramp ;  
Had planned, with careful and close survey,  
The road to the earliest settler's camp,  
And long ere the first log-house was made,  
Had slept in the forest unafraid,  
With curtain of leaves and pillow of moss ;  
Had roamed the ridges and swamps across,  
With compass and quadrant, stake and chain,  
And traced and measured, and noted down,  
And conned and studied, again and again,  
The boundary lines of the purposed town.

Was this the end ? Should he never see  
The growth and glory, by land and wave,  
Of the infant nation he helped to free,  
The young republic he fought to save ?  
Never again would his vigorous hand  
Clear the trees from the virgin land,  
Never with cordial warmth again  
Answer the grasp of his fellow-men ?  
Never more should he ford the streams  
Or roam the woods of the future town ?  
Was this the end of his happy dreams ?  
And thus must his brave strong life go down ?



## The Story of Thomas Fish

He thought of the home he had toiled to frame,  
The new-built house in the meadow set ;  
(The faithful meadow still bears his name,  
And a trace of the cellar is seen there yet.)  
The home that waited its coming crown,  
The promised sweetheart in Winthrop town ;  
And did she slumber with peaceful breath,  
While he was battling alone with death ?  
Or did she wake from her happy sleep,  
And peering out through the midnight dim,  
Seeing the snow-fall dense and deep,  
Think of his journey, and pray for him ?

Was this the end of his fond desire ?  
Was it for this inglorious close  
His life passed scathless amid the fire  
Poured from the cannon of foreign foes ?  
Was it for this he had dared to press  
Into the heart of the wilderness,  
And met and grappled, without a fear,  
The dangers and toils of the wild frontier ?  
Was it to die in the woods alone,  
Freezing slowly to senseless rock,  
He was saved in the perils his life had known  
And spared by the Indian's tomahawk ?

Ah, how cruel seemed all on earth !  
All he had valued, loved, or known !

## The Story of Thomas Fish

What could friendship and love be worth,  
    Since they left him to die alone?  
Empty mockery seemed they then,  
Love of women and praise of men —  
    False and hollow and useless all;  
And he pierced the night with his frenzied call,  
And pushed again through the hopeless drift,  
    And shouted and shrieked with his failing breath,  
Striving with desperate will to lift  
    The growing stupor he knew was death.

Utterly wearied out, at length,  
    He paused by the roots of a fallen pine;  
Yet strove, with his last remaining strength  
    To leave some record, or trace, or sign,  
For those who, searching, should find him there; —  
On a half-burned stump, by the wind blown bare,  
    With his trusty knife in the nerveless hold  
    Of fingers stiff with the cruel cold,  
He tried to fashion a word; — in vain!  
    The knife escaped from his frozen hand,  
And his feeble message of love and pain  
    No mortal ever could understand.

Powerless longer to strive or shout,  
    He dropped on his desolate death-bed there;  
The final flicker of hope went out,  
    And left him alone with his black despair.

## The Story of Thomas Fish

Little he thought as he slowly sunk  
Down to die by the pine-tree's trunk,  
    With never a helping hand to save  
    Or beckon him back from his snowy grave, —  
Little he dreamed, on his pillow cold,  
    That after the lapse of a hundred years,  
His mournful story would still be told  
    With tender pity and many tears.

Sweetly a strange delirium stole  
    The sense of anguish and pain away ;  
For a merciful moment, across his soul  
    A wondrous vision of summer lay ;  
The sunshine warm on the sweet pine woods,  
The murmur of wide green solitudes,  
    The glancing leaves by the breezes stirred,  
    The gurgle of brook and the song of bird ; —  
Softly the fluttering pulse grew still,  
    As spent waves die on a pleasant shore ;  
The wrathful tempest had wrought its will,  
    And the cold and darkness vexed no more.

And the merciless snow kept on and on,  
    And draped his bed with a curtain white,  
And covered his cold face, still and wan ;  
    And three days after, at fall of night  
(When a flying rumor of dread and fear  
Had startled the settlers far and near,

## The Story of Thomas Fish

And sore alarmed that he came not back,  
They followed his faint, mistaken track,)  
They found him frozen and stark, and bore  
With awe-struck faces and whispered speech,  
His stiffened form to the very door  
He had tried so vainly and long to reach.

There in the evening fire-light warm,  
They thawed the frost from his rigid limbs,  
And gently straightened his poor bent form ;  
And with prayer, and sermon, and quaint old  
hymns, —  
Their fitting and simple burial rite, —  
They buried him in his sweetheart's sight ;  
With tender reverence they laid him down  
Near her dwelling in Winthrop town.  
His grave was nameless, — and none may know,  
So many the changing years have been,  
Where the kind earth opened so long ago  
Her warm brown bosom, and took him in.

Scarce remembered and seldom told  
Even in the homes of the selfsame town  
Where the traveller died of the bitter cold,  
Is the sorrowful history here set down ;  
But many a time, in my childish years,  
I listened, spell-bound, with raining tears,

## The Whippoorwill

The old tradition, so sadly true,  
While fiercely the mad Maine snow-storms blew ;  
The tale of the gallant pioneer  
Frozen to death in the driving snow  
Of the winter midnight wild and drear,  
More than a hundred years ago.

Major Thomas Fish was a man of mark among the early settlers of the Androscoggin valley, Maine, and the pathetic story of his death has lingered there for over a hundred years. He perished in an unusually cold and violent snow-storm in 1784, on the road from Winthrop, where he had been to visit his sweetheart, a Miss Marrow, to Mr. Livermore's dwelling in the town which now bears the name of that sturdy pioneer, but was then called "New Port Royal."

### THE WHIPPOORWILL

(FOR MUSIC)

**W**HEN the sunset has faded, and the cool  
shadows darken,  
And the discords of daylight grow fainter,  
fainter, and are still,  
From the dim dusky silence, O hearken, O hearken,  
Comes the song of the twilight, the calling of the  
whippoorwill !  
O whippoorwill, dear whippoorwill, chanting sweet  
in the tender gloaming,  
Art thou born of dew and darkness, thou lonely,  
lonely whippoorwill ?

## The Thunderer

O, thou voice of the stillness, thou soul of the shadows,  
Thou art constant forever, thou lover of the summer night !  
When the stars bloom like flowers in the purple cloud-  
meadows,  
And the fire-fly floats shining along the ocean of  
the night.  
O whippoorwill, dear whippoorwill, chanting sweet  
in the tender gloaming,  
Art thou born of dew and darkness, thou lonely,  
lonely whippoorwill ?

## THE THUNDERER

**U** COME from the misty remote, on the broad  
black wings of the tempest,  
Shaking my terrible spear, the dread, irresistible  
lightning, —  
Darkening noonday to night, and scaring the earth  
with my anger.

Then do the hearts of the brave dissolve, and the  
boldest are silent,  
Faces grow pallid with fear, and pulses stand still in  
their beating,  
Laughter and music are hushed, and the knees of the  
strong smite together.

## The Thunderer

What are the labors of man, his utmost result and  
achievement,  
Counted beside my might, when I brandish the sword  
of my power ?  
But as the thistle-down that floats on the breath of the  
morning.

I hurl but the least of my bolts, and his home is a  
smouldering ruin ;  
I touch to his harvests my torch, and the labor of  
months is a smoke-wreath ;  
The works of his hands are as chaff caught up in the  
rage of a whirlwind.

What are the boulders immense, which frown from  
the mightiest mountains ?  
Lo, how I humble their pride, and rive them from  
summit to centre,  
Rend them away from their place, and scatter their  
fragments to atoms !

What are the kings of the wood, the growth of a  
hundred brief summers ?  
I breathe but the half of a breath, and they fall with  
their roots writhing skyward,  
Their beauty abased in the dust, their glory departed  
forever.

## The Thunderer

Mine is the ship on the sea, with its cargo of lives  
and of treasure,  
Buoyant with gladness and hope, and hastening fast  
to its haven,  
Bearing, perchance, in its heart, the trust and the  
welfare of nations.

Lo, at a flash of my eye, or a glint of my falchion,  
where is it?  
Sunk in the strangling brine, with its riches, and joys,  
and affections,  
Strong men and striplings and maids, and babes at the  
breasts of their mothers.

Gone, like a bubble of foam, that is beaten to mist in  
the breakers —  
Lost, like a phosphor-spark that glimmers and drops  
into darkness —  
Whelmed like a fire-fly drowned in the wild wash and  
whirl of the waters.

Mine are the coral isles which rise from the depths of  
the ocean,  
Builted cell upon cell, in the infinite cycles of  
ages,  
Slow and solid and sure, with base like the roots of  
the mountains.



## The Thunderer

How do they shiver and quake when the light of my  
glance falls upon them !

How do they crumble and melt in the bottomless  
midnight abysses !

Gone, like the drop that falls from the skimming  
wing of the sea-mew.

Mine are the powers of the air, the roaring and wrath-  
ful tornadoes,

Reaping the forests like wheat, and whirling the villages  
piecemeal,

Scattering firebrands and death, and wreaking com-  
plete devastation.

Mine are the awful and vast volcanoes, which belch  
at my bidding

Poisonous vapors and smoke, and red-hot rivers of  
lava,

Tongues of devouring fire, which lick up the towns in  
a moment.

Reddening the face of the sky with the hideous glare  
of their burning —

Causing the sea to boil and bubble and seethe like a  
caldron —

Making men mad with despair, and driving beasts  
headlong with terror.

## The Thunderer

How the deep craters respond, as my arrows flash  
brilliant above them !

Pouring on every side their torrents of wrath and  
destruction,

Scorching the shuddering earth with blazing billows  
on billows !

They drink up the terrified lakes — they frighten the  
streams from their courses —

They fill up the caves of the sea — they sweep off the  
forests like cobwebs —

What are the cities of men ? they smoke for a mo-  
ment, and are not.

At my mysterious sign, the solid earth cowers and  
trembles,

Opening abysses of death which swallow their victims  
by hundreds,

Crushing alike men and beasts, and ingulfing the dead  
and the living.

Other dread servants have I, whose labors are cease-  
less and silent,

Rivers which wear out the hills, and fill up the lakes  
with their substance,

Currents which gnaw at the coasts, till the mountains  
sink into the ocean.

## The Thunderer

Mine are the forces which lift new continents out of  
the waters —

Mine are the powers which waste and sap the founda-  
tions of headlands —

Mine is the might that creates new bounds for the  
hungering billows.

Mine is the whole spherèd earth, with all that it holds  
and produces,

Mine infinitesimal man, with his puerile boasts and  
assumptions;

All that he is or can compass is but as a mote in the  
tempest.

So I refashion the globe, and build it anew at my  
choosing,

Raising up snow-peaks and plains where once heaved  
the wind-beaten surges,

Bidding the salt sea roll back where once there were  
forests and cities.

Neither the deep is eternal, nor are the great hills  
everlasting;

All are transformed and recast in the slow constant  
grind of the ages,

Until no outline remains as it was at the dawn of  
creation.

## “An Amiable Child”

Thus, through vast eons ere yet ephemeral man was  
created,  
Ay, since the new-born earth reeled naked and blind  
out of chaos,  
Thus have I ruled it as mine, and made it my sport  
and my plaything.

Who shall dispute my control? or who shall fix  
bounds to my pleasure?  
What are the children of men, that I should regard  
them and spare them?  
Verily, less, in my eyes, than in theirs the small dust  
of the balance.

## “AN AMIABLE CHILD”

Close beside the drive-way in Riverside Park, New York City, is a marble monument enclosed by a railing, the whole in excellent preservation. The marble bears this inscription:—

“Erected to the memory of An Amiable Child, St. Claire Pollock, died 15th July, 1797, in the 5 year of his age.”

The records of Trinity Church prove that in 1792, the Rev. Benjamin Moore baptized there St. Claire, the son of Mr. George Pollock, an English resident of the city, who, at the time of the child's death, owned and lived on the tract of land wherein the grave was made. The adjoining tract was owned by Gulian C. Verplanck; and when, soon after St. Claire's death, business reverses caused Mr. Pollock to sell his New York property and return to England, he wrote back in 1800 to his old neighbor and friend, Mrs. Verplanck, asking her to accept as a gift the land occupied by the monument, on condition that she would preserve and care for it. She

“An Amiable Child”

did so as long as it remained in her hands, and all subsequent owners followed her example, until the three-mile strip of land along the Hudson was purchased by the city for the park and drive.



ORE than a hundred years ago,  
The darling of a household nest,  
Here by the Hudson's ceaseless flow,  
Was laid to early rest.

Little they thought, who reared this stone  
And read its lettering through their tears,  
That the dear name inscribed thereon  
Would last a hundred years ;

Until no mortal who might trace  
The quaintly sculptured words, would know  
Aught save the simple name and race  
Of him who sleeps below ;

Would last when theirs would all be lost,  
And of their lives no trace remain  
But this, to tell of fond hopes crossed,  
Of blight and bitter pain.

How different was the hillside then !  
Here stir and bustle entered not,  
Nor mingled crowds of steeds and men ;  
'Twas but a rural spot,

“An Amiable Child”

The border of a homestead farm,  
Where green boughs drooped and birds sang  
wild;  
Where love might fittingly embalm  
The memory of a child.

No strange craft ploughed the Hudson's breast,  
Sailless and swift, on even keel;  
No horseless rider paused to rest  
Beside his leaning wheel;

No steam-born steed, untired and fleet,  
With nerves of steel and breath of fire  
Rushed by; no crowds, with loitering feet,  
Watched the bright day expire.

Here stood the father, bowed with grief,  
Kindred and friends, a solemn row;  
The mother, like an autumn leaf,  
Shook in the storm of woe.

It was July — the season when  
The year is in its richest prime;  
Nature was lush and languid then —  
The noon of summer time.

And while she wept, hot tear on tear  
Starring the grass like sparks of dew,  
Doubtless some nesting bird sang near,  
And pierced her heart anew,

“An Amiable Child”

With thought of how the bird could keep  
Its nest-full safe from harm and dread,  
While she, poor mother-heart, must weep  
Her one fair darling dead.

The earth beneath this stone retains  
No trace of what was buried here ;  
Not even definite dust remains  
Of what was then so dear.

The band who mourned this gentle boy,  
Their bliss, their hopes, their happy lives,  
Are gone ; naught lives of all their joy ;  
Their sign of grief survives.

And all the pain of lonely days,  
And nights with sleepless sorrow wild,  
Hides in the quaint and stilted phrase,  
“An amiable child.”

Still, like a heavy atmosphere,  
Clings round the place a sense of woe,  
Ghost of the anguish suffered here  
A hundred years ago.

Alas, that gladness flies from us  
And leaves no record when it flies !  
That love and joy should vanish thus,  
While sorrow never dies !

THE MIRACLE-WORKERS

**C**OULD we but see them, the airy bands  
Of miracle-workers which Nature keeps  
Busy obeying her high commands  
With patient purpose that never sleeps !  
Those wondrous powers which since the birth  
Of growing things, when the first leaf sprung,  
Have kept the gracious and fruitful earth  
Renewed with years and forever young.

From the ocean's depths to the loftiest hill,  
And deep in the earth's unlighted breast,  
They ply, unceasing, their tireless skill,  
And know no moment of pause or rest ;  
But who has seen them, the mystic sprites,  
The working forces of earth and air,  
And light and water, which, days and nights,  
Labor incessantly everywhere ?

They taper the sprout to pierce the mould  
Of the yielding earth in the mellow spring ;  
They edge the columbine's red with gold,  
And paint the cardinal's brilliant wing ;  
They pencil lightly with tender pink  
The pale spring-beauty, that hides her flowers  
In chilly hollows where snow-drifts shrink  
Under April's persistent showers.



## The Miracle-workers

They keep the butterfly's wings unwet,  
Help ant and beaver to build and plan,  
And plait the leaf of the beech, while yet  
It bides in the bud, like a folded fan ;  
They rouse the birds ere the sun is up ;  
They teach the cricket to play his tune ;  
They fit the lid of the huntsman's-cup,  
And make the ocean obey the moon.

They tell the climbers the way to twine,  
Some to the left and some to the right,  
And no entreaty of yours or mine,  
Nor careful training by day or night  
Can make them vary or disobey,  
Reverse the bitter-sweet, or incline  
The wilful bind-weed the other way,  
Or turn the curl of the passion-vine.

No king's stern edict nor priest's behest  
Could change the course they have always run,—  
The honeysuckle from east to west  
And the ipomea to meet the sun.  
No despot rules with so strong a hand  
As these strange workers who never sleep,  
And no mere mortal can understand  
Why this vine clambers, while that must creep.

They freckle the leaves of the adder's-tongue,  
And teach its blossom its graceful droop,

## The Miracle-workers

They know how the hang-bird's nest is swung,  
And measure the length of the span-worm's loop ;  
They stored away in the earth's dark breast  
Her bounteous treasures of oil and coal ;  
They dye the tanager's vivid vest,  
And burnish the buttercup's golden bowl.

They hang the boughs of the chestnut tree  
With slender tassels of swinging bloom ;  
They wake the chrysalis tenderly,  
And call out life from its winter tomb ;  
They flatter the strawberry's white to red,  
And dint its coral with amber seeds ;  
They honey the tubes of the clover-head,  
And gild the ear-drops of jewel-weeds.

They trim the lanterns of living light  
That sail the air in the summer eves ;  
They stretch the gossamers in the night ;  
They curl the tendrils, and notch the leaves ;  
They lead the bee to the buckwheat blooms  
Whose hidden nectar she else might miss,  
And deck with garlands of silky plumes  
The clambering length of the clematis.

They weave unseen, in some magic loom,  
The grass-spread cobwebs, bedropt with light,  
And blow to sudden and fragrant bloom  
The evening-primrose buds at night ;

## The Miracle-workers

They teach the ox-eyes to dance and swing,  
And top the grass-waves with milk-white froth ;  
They girdle the wasp with a golden ring,  
And powder with silver the candle-moth.

They drape the curtains of morning mist ;  
They bridge with rainbows the cataract's flood ;  
They stripe the pansy, and deftly twist  
The point of the morning-glory bud ;  
They give the earthquake its awful force ;  
The dread volcano obeys their word ;  
They rouse the whirlwind and shape its course,  
And bronze the neck of the humming-bird.

They round the dewdrop that winks and shines  
Like a diamond-spark when the grass is wet ;  
They trace with purple the dainty lines  
In the cup of the shy white violet ;  
They warm the peach with a scarlet streak,  
And touch its velvet with rich perfume ;  
They redden the ripening apple's cheek,  
And dust the grape with its azure bloom.

They brown the acorn and carve its cup ;  
They find the spider her warp and woof ;  
They pack the chestnuts, and bind them up  
In their prickly covering, squirrel-proof,  
Until they are perfect, and ripe and sweet ;  
They mark the zone in the clover-leaf ;

## The Miracle-workers

They tint with amber the ripening wheat,  
And trim its beard for the harvest-sheaf.

They store in the melon's hard green rind  
Its core's crisp crimson, all sweet and cool ;  
They teach the silk-worm the way to wind  
Without a tangle, her silken spool ;  
They help the chipmunk hide carefully  
The tell-tale earth from its fresh-dug hole,  
And keep unruffled, and clean, and dry  
The satiny plush of the delving mole.

They sweeten the maple's lucent sap ;  
They spread the dome of the tent-worm's house ;  
They spin the silk for the maize-ear's wrap,  
And roof the runs of the meadow-mouse ;  
They light the lamps in the pumpkin-flowers,  
And pink rose-mallow, and hollyhock ;  
They warn the tree-frog of coming showers,  
And tell the time to the four-o'clock.

They teach the owlet to shun the day,  
The new-hatched partridge to run and hide,  
The homing pigeon to find its way  
Through unknown distance without a guide ;  
They aid the thrifty and careful bee  
To pack and fasten her pollen-load  
So as to leave her pinions free,  
And lose no grain on her homeward road.

## The Miracle-workers

They urge the hop-vine to climb so fast

We see its growth in an afternoon,  
And bid it rompingly hurry past  
The patient ivy, outstripped so soon ;  
They plant the lichens along the eaves  
Of time-worn roofs, in their slow decay ;  
They crimple the silk of the poppy-leaves,  
And set the thistle-down's sailing-day.

They tell the red-breast where earth-worms dwell ;

They guide the fledgling's uncertain flight ;  
They caution the sensitive immortelle  
Against the damp of the gathering night ;  
They limit the headlong hurricane,  
That levels towns in its cruel rage ;  
They shape the hail-stones, and slant the rain,  
And seam the rock for the saxifrage.

They hide the gem in its buried cave ;

They color the sea-shell with sunset-pink ;  
They curl the crest of the dancing wave,  
And blow the bubbles along its brink ;  
But who shall see them, the wondrous powers,  
Of earth and water and light and air,  
Which, counting cycles as only hours,  
Labor incessantly everywhere ?

They shape the snow-flakes in perfect forms

Of stars, and crosses, and tiny spheres ;

## A Little While

They beckon the tides and rule the storms  
And rend the rocks of a thousand years ;  
But who shall show us those airy bands  
Of miracle-workers which Nature keeps  
Ever obeying her high commands,  
With patient purpose that never sleeps ?

### A LITTLE WHILE

**A** LITTLE while, and it will all be over,  
So many weeks, perhaps so many hours ;  
I shall not care for kinsman, friend, nor lover,  
Watch the sweet sky, nor love the grass and  
flowers.

So little while, and I shall not remember  
Aught that delights or troubles me to-day ;  
Sunshine of June, and tempests of December,  
All will have ceased to cheer or cloud my way.

So little while, and here will linger only  
Fast-fading memories of a life in vain ;  
So little while, and I shall not be lonely ;  
How can I dread the close of toil and pain ?

So little while, and warfare will be ended,  
The fight with circumstance and destiny,  
And peace before unknown, uncomprehended,  
Will soothe me like a mother's lullaby.

So little while will end my small endeavor ;  
I shall no longer care for frown or smile ;  
I shall have ceased to cumber earth forever ;  
O heart, be patient yet a little while !

GOING A-SUMMERING

**T**HERE'S a stir in the household at early light,  
The mother is busy from dawn till night, —  
Her footstep is hurrying up and down,  
Her deft hand stitching at wrap and gown,  
Her foot is oftenest on the stair,  
Her busy presence is everywhere,  
In quick response to the frequent call  
Of "Mother ! Mother !" from one and all ;  
She knows no resting nor wearying —  
The young folks are going a-summering !

At last they are gone ; and the mother stands  
Waving farewell with her tired hands, —  
And then, with the patience of haloed saint,  
Without rebellion, without complaint,  
She turns from the glory of out-of-door  
To her hard, monotonous task once more,  
And gives herself, with a patient mind,  
To the endless, wearisome household grind,  
And never dreams of so strange a thing  
As the mother going a-summering !

## Going a-Summering

“Queen of the household?” Who bows to her?  
Rather a captive, a prisoner,  
    Who spends her life for her cherished ones,  
    Her thoughtless daughters and thankless sons  
Who never give her a moment’s heed,  
Save as the servant who fills their need;  
    The household roof or the door-yard tree  
    Is not more fixed in its place than she;  
’Twere scarcely stranger, should both take wing,  
Than that mother should go a-summering!

Many a summer-time she has seen  
Over and over the old routine;  
    Her college-boy has his time of rest,  
    Of leisure and sport that he likes the best;  
Her daughters, airy in lawns and lace,  
Escape the heat in some pleasant place,  
    But she remains in the humdrum round  
    Like the brick-yard horse where the clay is ground,—  
Bearing all burdens the days may bring  
That others may go a-summering.

But now at last there has come a change,  
In all her life there was naught so strange;  
    Her tireless footstep is heard no more  
    Up-stairs and down, and on every floor;  
The useful hands which could find no rest,  
Are still, and folded upon her breast—



Her ears are deaf to the constant call  
Of "Mother! Mother!" from great and small;  
At last, O wondrous, unheard-of thing,  
The mother has gone a-summering!

MARY LIVINGSTONE

**R**EMEMBERED by a silent few,  
She sleeps within a grave afar,  
Where the Zambesi's tide pours through  
The heart of eastern Africa;  
Remote from children, home, and friend,  
All that her youth had loved and known,  
She found her life's untimely end,—  
Love's martyr — Mary Livingstone.

No lettered stone, no marble slab,  
Tells where the white-browed stranger lies;  
The boughs of one huge baobab  
Spread wide between her and the skies,  
The burning skies of Africa  
Which smote her with their fever-blight;  
Do they not send a tender star  
To watch there in the lonely night?

The wild beasts of the jungle's maze  
Lurk there, in ambush for their prey;  
The native hunter lights his blaze  
And camps there, at the close of day,

Mary Livingstone

Unknowing that beneath his feet  
Her heart, once warm with faithful trust,  
The fondest heart that ever beat,  
Is mouldering slowly into dust.

Within a proud and stately tomb  
Among the great ones of the earth,  
*He* sleeps in grandeur, — he for whom  
She left the home that gave her birth,  
Daring all ills of land and sea,  
Disease and famine fierce and grim,  
Danger, and savage treachery,  
And death at last, — for love of him.

The old hard destiny was hers  
Which, while the ages dawn and pass,  
Awaits man's fondest worshippers ; —  
The old sad story which, alas,  
Were writ so many graves above  
Could but the sod bear evidence, —  
Of woman's all-enduring love  
And its most bitter recompense.

How sound she sleeps ! unmarked by her  
Beside the river's mighty flow  
Watches the scarlet kingfisher,  
Wallows the sullen buffalo ;  
In lush tall grasses, shoulder-high,  
The elephant disports and feeds,

And dripping hippopotami  
Plunge crashing through the giant reeds.

She takes no heed though near her side  
Pass scores of strange and fearsome things ;  
Dread writhing reptiles wind and glide,  
And gorgeous birds with irised wings  
Preen their soft plumes, and bathe and drink,  
And splendid orchids bloom and smile,  
While on the warm wave's oozy brink  
Slumbers the indolent crocodile.

And when the twilight waxes late,  
She trembles not that close beside  
Her bed, the lion and his mate  
Go down to lap the tepid tide ;  
Even when black midnight's shadows press,  
And all the night-world wakes and stirs,  
The voices of the wilderness  
Affright her not, — such sleep is hers.

The tiger crouches on her grave,  
The ape swings chattering overhead,  
And uncouth creatures from the wave  
Come up and bask beside her bed ;  
Yet what cares she, since he for whom  
She sacrificed, and strove, and died,  
Fills, world-renowned, a sculptured tomb  
Amid Westminster's storied pride ?

DREAMS

THE fate that rules the lives of mortals, sends  
To some, whatever good and precious seems,  
Wealth, leisure, love, renown, and hosts of  
friends —

To others, it sends dreams.

Yet lo, how evanescent is delight !

Riches, youth, beauty, and their flattering train  
Pass and are gone, like shadows in the night —  
But dreams — ah, dreams remain !

O blessed dreams ! The friendless and the old  
May dream of youth, and love's fond whisperings, —  
The beggar, that he owns unreckoned gold —  
The worm, that he has wings.

All other earthly joys may fade or fly

Like silver mist that melts in morning's beams,  
But dreams remain, and bless us till we die ;  
Let us give thanks for dreams !

OLD THEMES

CLEOPATRA is dead and gone ;  
She whose beauty beguiled like wine,  
Sleeps in spices, nor wakes at dawn ;  
Let her rest with her royal line.

Other cheeks are as smooth and dark,  
Other arms can caress and slay ;  
Other eyes have as soft a spark ;  
Leave her there to her slow decay.

Other serpents can twine about  
False men's heartstrings, and spoil their lives ;  
Other beautiful hands deal out  
Shame to husbands and woe to wives.

Other sirens can cling and charm,  
Other tigresses fawn and purr ;  
Let her lie in her buried balm,  
Dead and dry in her musty myrrh.

Why do poets and sages bring  
Added laurels to Sappho's crown ?  
Other women can sigh and sing —  
Other sweethearts can love and drown.

Why quote ever Penelope,  
Vainly true to a faithless mate ?  
Wives in plenty, as true as she,  
Weave and ravel, disconsolate.

Ah, poor-spirited wife, to grieve  
For her treacherous spouse, though he  
Left her lonely to weep and weave  
While he bent at Calypso's knee !

All these marvels are dead and gone ;  
Gone their triumphs and joys and shames,  
Yet we moderns keep on and on  
Harking back to their threadbare names.

Artist, poet, and sage to-day  
Paint them, vaunt them, and sing their praise,  
Heeding not that as great as they  
Live and move in these modern days.

Still of heroes long passed away,  
Dull and listless the schoolboy reads,  
Knowing not that his own bright day  
More than rivals their gallant deeds.

There are spirits as lofty now ;  
Many a hero has since possessed  
Will of iron, and kingly brow,  
Nerve of steel, and unfearing breast,

Still puissant in war and peace ;  
We can equal them here at home ;  
Heroes mighty as those of Greece,  
Statesmen crafty as those of Rome.

Bravery, daring, and noble hearts  
Perished not with a by-gone day ;  
Grace and beauty and winning arts  
Still infatuate, bind, and slay.

Dried to dust in its mummy-bands  
Vex no longer the hollow breast ;  
Worn-out shadows from worn-out lands  
Let them sleep ; they have earned their rest !

NEARING THE END

**T**HE winds are cold, the clouds drive fast,  
The west has lost its line of red,  
The shadows thicken, dim and vast,  
On every side and overhead ;  
My heart sinks weary and oppressed ;  
Yet lo ! on yonder perilous height  
Which I must climb before I rest,  
I see my father's window-light !

Ah, me ! my feet are tired and worn,  
With journeying since the dawn of day,  
The comrades who were mine at morn  
Have passed or lost me on the way ;  
The track is long and rough and steep,  
And lonely in the gathering night,  
Yet must I gain, before I sleep,  
My father's beckoning window-light.

With hindering rocks and briers I strive,  
And try to cheat the weary miles,  
And keep my faltering heart alive  
By picturing what loving smiles

## Always There

And eager arms and tender speech  
Will meet the wanderer to-night,  
When haply I at last shall reach  
My father's welcoming window-light !

### ALWAYS THERE

¶ SAID, "So many cares my days attend,  
So many tasks my thought and care demand,  
I will put by awhile my life-long friend ;  
He knows my heart, and he will understand.

"When, later, leisure days shall come to me,  
In that delightful calm, he, too, shall share ;  
I shall renew the old-time fealty,  
And find him true, — for he is always there."

So months passed by, and his fond messages  
Were unrewarded by an answering word ;  
My tender thoughts and kindly sympathies  
Were unexpressed, — deferred and still deferred.

Yet he was not forgotten ; many a night  
My thought went back to him with faithful care ;  
"Dear patient heart !" I said, "in time's despite  
He loves me still, — and he is always there !"



Months, seasons, even years went swiftly by,  
And when at last I would my fault repair,  
I learned that death had been more true than I,  
And found him ere I sought ;— he was not there !

IF YOUTH WERE EVERLASTING

♦ **I**F youth were everlasting,  
And love were always new,  
If vows were never broken,  
And hearts forever true,—

If glamor would not vanish,  
Nor faith's pure fire grow cold,  
If He would never wander,  
Nor She grow sad and old,—

If trust were never flavored  
With doubt's most bitter leaven,  
There'd be no need of dying,  
For living would be heaven !

THE CUCKOO-CLOCK

♦ **I**N childhood's credulous morning, ere  
I learned how seemings cheat and mock,  
When wonders waited far and near,  
And marvels met me in a flock,  
I stood entranced, to see and hear  
A cuckoo-clock.

## The Cuckoo-Clock

Against the wall it used to hang,  
Its pine-cone weights swung full in view ;  
When the hour struck, a blind door sprang  
Ajar, — a yellow bird hopped through,  
And nodding cheerily, he sang,  
“ Cuckoo ! Cuckoo ! ”

How marvellous it was to me !  
The charm stayed always fresh and new,  
And still I waited patiently  
And watched again the half-hour through,  
To hear that voice of mystery —  
“ Cuckoo ! Cuckoo ! ”

Now, wise in sorry lore, conferred  
By many a disillusion's shock,  
I know the truth of song and bird ;  
The cuckoo was a painted block,  
And bellows breathed its wondrous word,  
“ Cuckoo ! Cuckoo ! ”

Yet I forgive it, after all —  
We love the cheats our youth held true !  
There hangs against my study wall  
A cuckoo-clock, the seasons through,  
And hour on hour I hear it call,  
“ Cuckoo ! Cuckoo ! ”

And sometimes, children come and gaze  
And marvel as I used to do,  
With deep, delicious, awed amaze  
In wide bright eyes of brown or blue ;  
The child grows old — but childhood stays ;  
“ Cuckoo ! Cuckoo ! ”

TWO POINTS OF VIEW

THE down of youth lay faint about his lips,  
The heart of youth beat hot within his breast,  
And as he kissed her dainty finger-tips,  
“ Oh, bid me hope, dearest and loveliest,  
Leave me not tortured by unending pain ;  
You are the one love of my life,” he said  
“ And I can never, never love again,  
No, never love again !  
When mirth and strength and gladsome spring are fled,  
I shall be still the same, till life is past ;  
Once, only once, youth’s violet-path we tread ;  
Believe me, dear, my first love is my last,  
My first love is my last ! ”

Years after, June looked down upon a pair  
Beneath the soft shade of an apple bough ;  
The frost of time lay white upon his hair,  
The lines of years were writ on cheek and brow ;  
And as he bent above her garden-chair



Rich were its stately palaces, and tall  
Its hundred towers that glittered in the light ;  
Splendid its fountains, squares, and avenues,  
And sweet its many gardens full of bloom ;  
And to a dweller standing in the gate,  
I spake and said, “ It is a goodly place ;  
How long, I pray thee, has the city stood ? ”

And he replied, “ How strange a man art thou !  
Our sires, or theirs before them, never knew  
A time when this great city was not here,  
Proud, grand, eternal as thou seest it ;  
There is no record when it first began ;  
It hath been always even as it is now.”

A thousand years went by, and once again  
I wandered to the splendid city's site ;  
The space was one wide stretch of treeless sand,  
No vestige of its walls or towers remained ;  
Even the stones of which they had been built  
Had all been either buried or removed ;  
And, only living thing in all the waste,  
A strolling simpler bent to gather herbs.  
“ How long,” I said, “ has this wide plain been bare ?  
What hath destroyed the city that was here ? ”

And he replied, “ Thou ravest, traveller ;  
No city ever stood on this broad plain ;

## The Story of Kidzih

This is no place for domes and palaces ;  
Our fathers and our fathers' fathers knew  
That it has always been an untracked waste,  
Unoccupied and lonely, even as now."

A thousand years had passed, when yet once more  
I wandered where the arid plain had been,  
And lo, the sea rolled there, with waves, and ships,  
And wrecks, and rages. On the shingly shore  
Among the wave-worn stones and broken shells  
A fisher mended nets. I spake and said,  
"When did these waters overflow the land ?  
How long, I pray thee, has the sea been here ?"

"How long ?" he said, and mocked me. "Verily  
The sea was always here. My fathers won  
Their living from its waters, even as I ;  
So will my children's children after me,  
And theirs still after them again. The sea ?  
The sea abides forever ; art thou mad ?"

A thousand years went by, I sought the place  
And there was neither city, sand, nor sea ;  
But one vast, tangled, trackless wilderness,  
Where strange beasts roamed, and strange birds built  
their nests ;  
And of a lonely hunter I inquired,  
"How long has this great forest flourished here ?"

And whither fled the waters of the sea  
Which rolled and murmured when I stood here last ? ”

“ The sea ? ” he said, “ the sea is leagues away ;  
Thou dreamest, or art merry with much wine ;  
My fathers and their fathers hunted here  
In this wide forest, whereof no man knows  
The birth or the beginning, nor can guess  
The age, because it hath been always here ! ”

Again a thousand years, and yet again  
I walked that way, and lo, before my eyes,  
There stood a city, populous and fair,  
Richer and statelier than that of old,  
Full of all beauty, wisdom, and delight,  
The home of all things marvellous and rare ;  
And to a loiterer I spake, and said,  
“ I pray thee, when was this great city built ?  
Who felled the mighty forest that was here ? ”

He gazed at me, and fear was in his eyes ;  
“ The city ? ’Tis indeed an ancient one,  
Its generations have grown old and died ;  
It hath been thus through all recorded time,  
And there was never any forest here ! ”

TRUE

(MONOSYLLABLES)

**T**HE fair frail blooms which loved the sun  
Grew faint at touch of cold,  
And chilled and pale, fell one by one,  
Dead in the dust and mould.

In yon tall tree, now bleached and thinned,  
A nest swings frayed and lone,  
All soaked with rain and rent by wind, —  
Its fair freight fledged and flown.

Where are the birds, the moths, the bees,  
And scores of glad free things  
Which thronged the ground, the grass, the trees,  
Or thrilled the air with wings?

Gone with the warmth and bloom and light  
Born of the sun and sky,  
Ere yet there fell this grief and blight,  
And the chill nights drew nigh.

On the low bough that arched the gate  
When days were warm and long,  
A wren, that has no nest or mate,  
Droops, all too sad for song.



The sun has set, but left no trace  
Of rose or gold ; in vain  
Hope scans the sky ; its dull cold face  
Is dark with threats of rain.

Shorn of its fruit, still clings the vine,  
Its fair robes torn and sere ;  
No tint is left, nor sound, nor sign,  
Of all that June held dear.

The grass that edged the beds of bloom  
Has changed its green to brown ;  
And curled dead leaves that sigh of doom,  
The wind drives up and down.

But here, where down the dim, wet walks  
The blanched stems whirl and beat,  
One rose looks through the bare gray stalks,  
And charms the air with sweet, —

As one brave heart, when all the truth  
On earth seems dead or lost,  
Still keeps the faith and fire of youth,  
And smiles in spite of frost.

Ah, though the friends I once held dear  
Are far, or false, or flown,  
I need not grieve, for you are here,  
My hope, my love, my own !

THE MAN AND THE TREE

THERE lived a Man, as his neighbors tell,  
Who built him a house wherein to dwell,  
And near its gateway he set a Tree ;  
“ It will shield my roof from the wind,” said he,  
“ In the winter storms, — and in summer days  
Will shelter it from the sultry rays ;  
It will beckon the birds to come and sing  
And soothe my leisure at evening ;  
Its slumbrous murmur will charm my dreams,  
And greet my ear when the morning beams ;  
It will sweeten the air I breathe, and be  
A guardian angel to mine and me.”  
But the Tree was nursing another plan  
Ungessed by the Man.

“ This,” it groaned, “ is my enemy, Man,  
Spoiler since first his race began ;  
He and his fathers, since their birth, .  
Have torn my kind from their native earth,  
Have rent and severed them, trunk and limb,  
And left them skeletons, stark and grim ;  
Have sliced their vitals, and split their hearts,  
Burned them, and sold them in alien marts ;  
He is the foe of my whole wide clan,”  
Said the Tree of the Man.

The Man and the Tree

“Wherever his fatal power is felt  
My helpless kindred before it melt ;  
    Wherever his vandal foot is placed  
    Go fell destruction and wanton waste  
Of all our tribe, who possessed the earth  
Long ere the tyrant Man had birth ;  
    He mows our legions with steel and fire,  
    To suit his selfish, uncurbed desire,  
No sylvan region his greed escapes ;  
He tortures us to a myriad shapes ;  
    From the mightiest building, the tallest spire,  
    To the thin match-splinter that lights his fire,  
From miles of roofs to the sticks of a fan,”  
    Said the Tree of the Man.

“He has torn me away from my home,” it said,  
“He has maimed my roots, he has shorn my head,  
    And dragged me far from the pleasant place  
    Wherein were freedom, and joy, and space, —  
Far from liberty, home, and kin,  
And set me here in the murk and din  
    Of the choking town, where I cannot hear  
    The river’s murmur, so sweet and clear,  
Nor see my kindred on slope and lea,  
Nor answer back when they call to me ;  
    Shall he not suffer for this, his crime ?  
    But I am patient, — I bide my time, —

## The Man and the Tree

And when it comes, let him boast who can,"  
Said the Tree of the Man.

Years passed, and the Tree grew tall and strong,  
As quite forgetting its olden wrong,  
And the Man looked upward, as day by day  
He passed beneath, and would smile, and say,  
"How strong and lovely, how tall and wide  
It grows in its graceful strength and pride!  
It has been my comfort for many a year,  
Its voice sounds last on my drowsy ear,  
It greets me first when the morning shines,  
It sings to me when the day declines,  
Constant and faithful the whole year round,  
The firmest friend I have ever found;  
Few human hearts are as true to me,"  
Said the Man of the Tree.

There came a space in the late and drear  
Winter-time of the changeful year,  
When, driven by tempest, a bitter rain  
Sheeted with crystal roof and pane;  
It pierced like needles, it smote like hail,  
Coating the world with its icy mail,  
All night long, till the tardy dawn,  
Freezing to all it fell upon.  
Heavy and stiff stood the laden Tree  
Cased in its glittering mystery,

Branch and twig in their novel guise  
Greatened to thrice their natural size ;  
And the limb that sheltered the door-yard gate  
Joyed anew in its added weight ;  
“ My time has come,” — so its musing ran, —  
“ And here is the Man ! ”

He trod the path on his morning way  
As he had trodden it every day  
Morn and even, for thirty years ;  
And lo ! with a shock like the crash of spheres,  
The waiting limb, like the arm of Fate,  
Fell, and crushed him beneath its weight ;  
“ To which is the victory ? ” said the Tree,  
“ To the Man, or Me ? ”

### LEFT ALONE

**F**ROM far below the street-lamp's glow  
Sends tremulous shadows to and fro,  
Its radiance shines through lacing vines  
Tracing in clearest shadow-lines  
The outline of one lingering leaf,  
An emblem of forsaken grief.

Saddest of fates, alone it waits,  
Poor leaf, that had so many mates !  
Grown frayed and old by wind and cold  
In stormy midnights unconsolated,

## The Red Columbine

Faded and torn it hangs forlorn,  
For all its kindred left to mourn.

Yet close it clings and turns and swings ;  
Is it the loneliest of things,  
Or does it dream of warmth and gleam,  
Of singing bird and laughing stream ?  
And fondly feign that spring's soft rain  
Will bring its beauty back again ?

### THE RED COLUMBINE

**F**AIR fragile daughter of the ledge,  
Thou shakest in the breezes free  
Thy gold-rimmed bells along the edge  
Of headlands looking out to sea,

Or climbest up the rugged face  
Of inland boulders, high and steep,  
Or fringest with thy airy grace  
The precipice whence waters leap.

Fair herald of the race of flowers !  
Daintiest of all the spring-time knows,  
Fresh with the chill of April showers  
Or breath of late-dissolving snows ;

## The Red Columbine

The secret places of the rocks  
Wherein no human foot may stand,  
The overhanging crag, that mocks  
The bravest climber's reaching hand ;

The inaccessible ravine  
Shadowed and dewy all day long,  
Where at the bottom, dimly seen,  
The unsunned brook repeats its song ;

The cliff unscaled by daring feet,  
The glen concealed in twilight gloom, —  
These offer thee their safe retreat  
And look upon thy hidden bloom.

Thou lov'st to climb the highest rock,  
Seamed by a finger's breath of soil,  
And thence look brightly down, and mock  
The lover who would seize and spoil.

Uncloistered nun among the flowers !  
Thou keep'st thy virgin pride and state,  
Kissed only by the winds and showers,  
From all the world inviolate.

The winged banditti of the air  
Who plunder through the summer hours,  
The insect thieves which everywhere  
Rob and despoil the helpless flowers,

## When Nothing Grows

Are yet asleep ; the chrysalis  
Still in his branch-hung hammock swings,  
Unconscious of the coming bliss  
Of sunshine, liberty, and wings.

Ah, flower that virgin-hearted dies,  
Whose soul no butterfly has stirred,  
Whose honey-laden nectaries  
Have never known a humming-bird !

Ere wasps forsake their cradling clay,  
Or night-moths haunt the apple bough,  
Thou liv'st thy brief and lonely day, —  
And when the bee comes, where art thou ?

## WHEN NOTHING GROWS



DREARY time of early spring,  
When chill and bleak the March wind  
blows,  
When not a bluebird dares to sing  
And nothing grows !

Each tree-trunk's northern shadow shields  
A handful of unmelted snow,  
Where winter slinks along the fields  
Still loath to go ; —



## When Nothing Grows

As Indian warriors warily  
Retreating from a conquering foe,  
Skulk step by step from tree to tree,  
Sullen and slow.

The sun shines on the sodden ground ;  
The muddy river thaws and flows ;  
Its murmur has a spring-like sound, —  
But nothing grows !

Vainly the barren hillsides crave  
Some solace for their wintry woes ;  
Dead weeds and withered grass-bents wave —  
But nothing grows !

Even the big skunk-cabbage sprout,  
The earliest thing the valley knows,  
Dares not above the ground peep out —  
No, nothing grows !

No crocus stars the garden's edge ;  
No daffodil in yellow glows ;  
No pretty white-hearts fringe the ledge —  
Ah, nothing grows !

No saxifrage its small white crest  
Along the shallow rock-seam shows ;  
No columbine forsakes her rest,  
For nothing grows !

## The Ice Glen

Come, grass, and fringe the muddy ways!  
Let docks and thistles crowd between,  
Break up these dreary browns and grays  
With living green!

For O, to see the humblest weed  
Push up its shoots alive and bright,  
The meanest thing that springs from seed  
Would be delight!

O March, forbear your blustering might!  
Depart, with frowns and gusts and snows!  
And come, ye days of warmth and light,  
When something grows!

## THE ICE GLEN

**I** KNOW a place in far New England's woods,  
A wild ravine between two rocky walls,  
So deep that there no ray of sun intrudes  
Nor gleam of moonlight falls.

Bough over bough of hemlock, spruce, and fir,  
Rooted in fissures up and down the height  
Of that steep chasm, wherein no breezes stir,  
Shut out the warmth and light.

Not even the fiercest rays of summer noon  
Pierce through the cool green twilight of the grot ;  
No rain-drops patter there their murmuring tune,  
And rude winds enter not.

How still it is ! how strange and cold the shade !  
A sudden shiver shakes through every limb  
Even in August, one who dares invade  
The cavern weird and dim.

And if he penetrates the densest shade  
And fastness of this dryad's paradise,  
He finds the chill ghost of a dead cascade,  
A gorge of solid ice,

Frozen, it may be, centuries ago,  
Nor ever thawed in summer heat or rain,  
Since in some vast upheaval, strong and slow,  
The great rocks split in twain.

Below old mouldering trunks and mossy stones,  
From an invisible depth, there rise alway  
Faint sobs, as if a prisoned naiad moans  
Her banishment from day.

The sigh of waters in the deep ravine  
Gurgling through darkness far from human eye ;  
A hidden stream that never yet has seen  
The radiance of the sky ;

## The Ice Glen

Born of the unwilling ice that only yields  
Awhile when summer's warmest fervors come ;  
Soon as November sweeps the blighted fields,  
The plaintive voice is dumb.

Seldom a human footstep dares the rocks,  
Seeking this winter-heart in summer's breast ;  
The timid woodchuck and the wary fox  
Are seldom dispossessed.

Sometimes a bird, from warm skies overhead,  
Fans the chill silence with its startled wing ;  
Then hastens toward the sun, as if in dread,  
Nor ever stays to sing.

The pitcher-plant lifts there its brimming urns,  
With Indian-pipes, of sun and wind afraid ;  
Mosses pile deep, and delicatest ferns  
Thrive in the cool moist shade.

Ah, often in the languid lifeless heat  
Of scorching days in warmer latitudes,  
I think of that unsunned and deep retreat  
In far New England's woods,

And long to drink again that icy drip  
Which merrily we children caught and quaffed  
From cups of broad green leaves, with shivering sip,  
And laugh as then we laughed !

Yet when life's dusty ways are hot and dry,  
And noisy with the hurrying feet of men,  
It comforts me that still my native sky  
Spans that enchanted glen —

That restful silence, known and sought by few,  
Sweet with delicious breath of moss and brakes,  
All pearled with drops of never drying dew  
Which no rude footstep shakes ;

Where, spared by progress, unimproved by art,  
Still the rocks drip, the hidden waters flow,  
Pure, fresh, unspoiled, as was the childish heart  
That loved them long ago !

#### FAITH AND SIGHT

IF the great Ruler of the worlds should be  
Moved to descend from His eternal place,  
To veil the awful splendor of His face,  
And lay aside invisibility,  
So that our feeble eyes unblindedly  
Might bear the softened glory, by His grace,  
How gladly should we hasten to embrace  
The privilege of worship at His knee !  
From every corner of earth's peopled space,  
From every island shouldered by the sea,  
How would all souls, of every clime and race,

Gather to pour strong prayer and tremulous plea,  
Unuttered now, because we cannot trace  
The way to Him, and lack the faith to see!

BLOWING BUBBLES

**W**E blew two bubbles, one fair day,  
My love and I, my love and I,  
And gave them, as they sailed away,  
Our names, my love and I.

We said, "If these frail namesakes rise  
Together in the sunny skies,  
Whole and unbroken, till we lose  
Amid the clouds their changing hues, —  
Then we shall know that neither heart  
Will ever break, or ever part  
From its one mate, our lifetime through,  
Until we die, —  
But each keep whole and each keep true,  
My precious love and I!

"But ah, should either sink or break,  
My love or I, my love or I,  
One heart will change, and one will ache, —  
Alas, my love and I!"  
We smiled to see the shining things  
Go soaring up on viewless wings,

Fair crystal spheres of iris-light, —  
Till one fell fluttering from its height,  
    And reeling through the dizzy air,  
    Flashed like a thought and vanished — where ?  
“ Alas ! ” we said, “ how sad and strange !  
    Why is it, why,  
That one must die or one must change,  
    My happy love or I ? ”

'Tis many a summer since we two,  
    My love and I, my love and I,  
Thus sported in the bloom and dew,  
    My merry love and I.  
Long years with varying shade and light  
Have passed like bubbles out of sight ;  
The old tradition that we knew  
And grieved because we thought it true,  
    Proved false, like many a one beside,  
    For neither changed, and neither died ;  
The constant hearts we had of yore  
    Time could but try —  
Now we are one forevermore,  
    My darling love and I !

A FARMER'S WIFE

◆ I KNOW an old-time farm-house, miles remote  
From shriek of steam, and deafening noise  
of streets,

Where one may hear the shy brown thrush's note,  
And smell the hayfield's sweets.

Therein were order and tranquillity,  
Where all life's jarring discords seemed to cease;  
Far off the world's loud current hastened by,  
But here were calm and peace.

A soothing power charmed that quiet place  
With gentle presence and serene control;  
A gracious woman with a still, pale face,  
A sweet and silent soul.

Such placid ways were hers, such tender art,  
As made her one of love's own ministers;  
She might almost have healed a broken heart  
With that soft touch of hers.

Yet if her own heart ached, — and all hearts faint  
And ache sometimes, — she said no murmuring  
word;

No breath of blame, of censure or complaint  
From her still lips was heard.



## A Farmer's Wife

The farmer and his men came in at noon,  
Full of the open air's fresh, vigorous life,  
And took an hour of rest, — a blessed boon  
Denied the farmer's wife.

Even the strong oxen rested from their yoke  
When mid-day came, and when the sunset dimmed ;  
When did *she* rest ? At earliest dawn she woke  
Still tired and weary-limbed,

To lift once more the burden of the day,  
And bear its heavy weight as best she might,  
Toiling not only daylight's hours away,  
But late into the night.

To-day her patient, uncomplaining breast  
Forgets all grief and pain ; life's golden bowl  
Is broken ; gone at last to needed rest,  
That sweet and silent soul.

The urgent morning calling from the east,  
Wakes not the housewife from her sleep profound ;  
Her noiseless foot and tireless hand have ceased  
From their accustomed round.

Year after year she walked her quiet path,  
Burdened with cares and toils for every day,  
And many children gathered round her hearth,  
Grew up, and went their way,


## Rain in the Night

Calling her blessed, as their thoughts went back  
To her mild ministry and still, pale face,  
Which the old home must now forever lack,  
And nothing can replace.

No more with faltering footsteps will she climb  
Life's hardest road, with toil-drops on her brow ;  
In spite of dairy-work and haying-time  
She has her nooning now.

Faithful and patient mother, friend, and wife !  
Thy name shall still be dear, though long years  
roll ;  
Thy mission ended not with this poor life,  
O sweet and silent soul !

## RAIN IN THE NIGHT

 F all great Nature's voices, grand or sweet,  
Not one can bring such fulness of delight  
As this which now I hear, — the rhythmic beat  
Of raindrops falling on the leaves at night.

How soft and sweet ! The fragrant atmosphere  
Hints at new flowers wherein no bee hath lain ;  
And listening, the keen sense seems to hear  
Petals and leaves uncurling in the rain.

The air flows cool, and yet no zephyr stirs  
 The pendulous blossoms of the chestnut tree ;  
 Peace claims the dark still hour and makes it hers,  
 And all the night-world breathes tranquillity.

The drowsy cricket, shrilling all alone,  
 In some dry crevice housed from storm and stress,  
 Its tireless and incessant monotone  
 Seems but to emphasize the quietness.

The cares and fears of daylight fade and flee,  
 And all our many pains and heart-aches seem  
 Charmed into slumber by the mystic three  
 Consoling angels, — Silence, Rest, and Dream.

WITCH-HAZEL

**T**HE last lone aster in the wood has died,  
 And taken wings and flown ;  
 The sighing oaks, the evergreen's dark pride,  
 And shivering beeches, keep their leaves alone.

From the chill breath of late October's blast  
 That all the foliage seared,  
 Even the loyal gentian shrank at last,  
 And gathering up her fringes, disappeared.

## Witch-hazel

The wood is silent as an unswept lute ;  
Color and song have fled ;  
Only the brave black-alder's brilliant fruit  
Lights the sere deadness with its living red.

But what is this wild fragrance that pervades  
The air like incense-smoke ?  
Pungent as spices blown in tropic shades,  
Subtle as some enchanter might evoke.

Not like the scent of flower, nor drug, nor balm,  
Nor resins from the east,  
Yet tracing soul and sense in such a charm  
As holds us when the thrush's song has ceased.

Mysterious, gradual, like the gathering dews  
And damp, sweet scents of night,  
Whence is this strange aroma that imbues  
The lone and leafless wood with new delight ?

And while the questioner drinks, with parted lips  
The mystical draught, — behold !  
A wondrous bush, beplumed from root to tips  
With crimped and curling bloom of shredded gold !

Not even the smallest leaf or hint of green  
Is mingled with its sprays,  
But every slender stem and twig is seen  
Haloed with flickerings of yellow blaze.

Witch-hazel

What wizard, wise in spells of drugs and gums,  
    With weird divining-rod,  
Conjures this luminous loveliness that comes  
As if by magic from the frozen sod?

Fearless witch-hazel! braver than the oak  
    That dares not bloom till spring,  
Thus to defy the frost's benumbing stroke  
With challenge of November blossoming!

And yet it has an airy, delicate grace  
    Denied all other flowers,  
And lights the gloom as some beloved face  
Dawns on the dark of melancholy hours.

Miraculous shrub, that thus in frost and blight  
    Smilest all undismayed,  
And scatterest from thy wands of golden light  
A sudden sunshine in the chilly glade.

Sprite of New England forests! he was wise  
    Who gave thee thy quaint name,  
As, threading wind-swept woods, with awed sur-  
    prise,  
He first beheld thy waving fan of flame!

A WINDING STREAM

**A** picture lights my chamber wall,  
Where first the sun-rays beam,  
A glimpse of rural loveliness,  
A little winding stream.

Embowered in shade and quietness,  
Yet touched with sunny gleam  
When ripples run before the breeze,  
A pleasant winding stream.

There is no hurry in its flow ;  
It lies as in a dream,  
Or creeps among its sedge and reeds,  
A lazy winding stream.

Often, when tired with city noise,  
I gaze on it, and dream  
I walk, with slow enchanted feet,  
Beside that winding stream.

I gather tall blue violets  
Among the tender ferns,  
I search for harebells, with the dew  
Cool in their azure urns.

I see the minnow flash along,  
A darting silver gleam,

## The Ministry of Hassan

I hear the rushes whisper sweet  
Along the sleepy stream.

I hunt for frail anemones,  
And blood-root blossoms fair,  
And loiter in the woodland ways,  
Nor leave my study chair.

No winter blights its verdant banks,  
No storm's black shadows seem  
To gather on the placid face  
Of that sweet winding stream.

And so although the work-day world  
Seems sometimes poor in cheer,  
I still have morning all the day,  
And summer all the year.

And though wild snow-falls drift and whirl,  
And tempests rage and scream,  
Still, rushes fringe and fern-fronds kiss  
That little winding stream.

### THE MINISTRY OF HASSAN

**B**Y a clear well, beside a lonely road,  
Hassan, the humble, had his poor abode.

He could not roam abroad in search of fame  
Or noble deeds, for he was bent and lame.

## The Ministry of Hassan

No eyes smiled back to his at night or morn,  
And evermore he moaned, " Why was I born ?

" What good can I achieve ? Why do I live  
Who have no strength to strive, no gold to give ?

" Others are opulent, beloved, renowned ;  
What can *I* reach ? Why cumber I the ground ? "

Even then a honey-bee, in passing, fell,  
Burdened with pollen, in his crystal well,

And Hassan raised it as it struggling lay,  
Dried its wet wings, and sped it on its way,

And still repining, sought his daily toil,  
Digging and watering the needy soil

About his grape-vines, that he might one day  
Share their rich fruit with those who came that way.

He pruned the cruel thorns and briers which tore  
The feet and robes of travellers by his door ;

He picked the sharp stones from the trodden way  
Where barefoot pilgrims plodded, day by day,

And beggar children, with unsandalled feet,  
Wandered along, in weariness and heat.



## The Ministry of Hassan

He brought them, in his carven cocoa-shell,  
Draughts of sweet water from his living well ;

He found the lost lamb, wandering from its own,  
And soothed its shivering by his chimney-stone ;

Spared the poor moth, that sought his taper's blaze,  
And fed the hungry birds on winter days ;

Saved the weak fledgling, fallen from the nest,  
Calmed its wild fear, and warmed it in his breast ;

Rescued the fire-fly from the spider's snare,  
And sent it on its shining path in air,

And was a helper and a friend indeed  
To every suffering creature in its need :

Yet all the while bewailed his lack of worth,  
And wondered what his use could be on earth.

But when his blameless days had all gone by,  
And Hassan sought his bed of boughs to die,

A tall white angel stood beside him there,  
And said, "Thou hast had many ills to bear,

"O Hassan, and hast grieved in solitude  
Because thou couldst not do great deeds of good ;

## A Silent Love

“ But since thou hast consoled the humblest things  
Which weep, or crawl on earth, or soar on wings,

“ Cherishing all with thy wide charity,  
Behold, beloved, thou didst it unto Me ! ”

Then Hassan saw how blindly he had wept  
His narrow powers. And he smiled, and slept.

## A SILENT LOVE

(MARGARET)

**S**LIGHTED by fortune and the careless crowd,  
There lived a man unsought by wealth or  
fame;

No thousands blocked his way, with plaudits loud,  
No city built proud arches in his name, —  
Yet was he blest, as few in millions are,  
In a great love, that watched him from afar.

A pure love, born in loneliness and tears,  
Such tears, such loneliness, as few have known ;  
Prayed over, wrestled with for years on years,  
In bitter pain and hopelessness, alone ;  
Thrust back and argued down, yet hour by hour  
Gaining new life, and steadfastness, and power.

How could he know, across the hemisphere,  
That far beyond his mountains' purple rim,  
With tender thought and secret prayer and tear,  
That constant soul turned silently to him,  
As, craving neither recompense nor boon,  
The faithful sea yearns toward the unconscious moon ?

It clung about him like the very air, —  
The vital air that gave him life and breath ;  
It saved his soul from uttermost despair ;  
It kept his hands from stain, his feet from death,  
On the wild mountain trail, with midnight dim  
It blessed, defended, warmed, and guided him.

It watched above his pillow when he slept ;  
It went beside him when the morning came ;  
It smoothed the way wherein he walked, and kept  
All evil from him, like a sword of flame ;  
It led his wandering steps, the long years through,  
From many a peril that he never knew.

The mountain lion snuffed about his camp,  
But dared not enter where love barred the way ;  
The grizzly watched afar his twinkling lamp,  
Yet knew he was defended where he lay ;  
The rattlesnake slid harmless from his path,  
And storm and torrent spared him in their wrath.

## A Silent Love

The landslide paused till he passed safely by,  
The giant tree held back its falling limb,  
The tempest raged, the lightning cleft the sky,  
And yet the thunderer launched no bolt at him ;  
Dangers pressed close, around, above, below,  
Yet smote him not, — because she loved him so.

But he, the one so worshipped, never guessed  
In all the years that such a love as this  
Had kept the cruel prowler from his rest,  
His foot from slipping on the precipice,  
The serpent from his path, — defied all harms  
And held him as in “ everlasting arms.”

Oh, it is well that love intense and pure  
Though all unknown and unrequited long,  
Can teach the tenderest spirit to endure,  
And keep the heart that shrines it warm and strong,  
Can drown life's dissonant din with sweet accord,  
And be its own munificent reward !

Can even rejoice, though treading day by day  
The thorniest pathway pressed by human feet,  
And see beyond the rough and cruel way  
Where the clouds darken and the tempests beat,  
And blood-stains mark the track its feet have trod,  
One gleam of golden light, — and so thank God !

A STAR

**M**Y window, on an airy height,  
Commands a view so wide and far,  
That from my pillow, in the night,  
I see full many a window light,  
And watch the march of many a star.

One, large, and glorious, and slow,  
Appears when all the world is still,  
Spreading a soft, prophetic glow,  
Before its perfect splendors show  
Above the farthest eastern hill.

With streaks of dawning gold, it makes  
A little sunrise of its own, —  
Then slow its upward journey takes  
Past silver isles, past sapphire lakes,  
Serenely, splendidly alone.

Oh, if a human soul could so  
Be raised all earthly needs above, —  
Could on its destined journey go  
Sufficient to itself, nor know  
The aching need of human love!

Who knows but on that world I view  
And call it but a larger star,

## The City Where No Man Dwells

The souls of those I loved and knew  
May dwell, and still, unchanged and true,  
Look down upon me from afar ?

Keep to your caverns, rain and mist,  
To other skies your legions lead !  
If the great star, so long unmissed,  
Should fail to keep its nightly tryst,  
Mine would be solitude indeed !

## THE CITY WHERE NO MAN DWELLS

**I**T stands on a pleasant hillside,  
Where the grass grows green and sweet,  
Apart from the town's commotion,  
And the noise of hurrying feet ;  
Around it the spirit of silence  
Seems weaving its deepest spells,  
And the hush is seldom broken  
In the City Where No Man Dwells.

There are many a dome and pillar,  
And many a roof and spire,  
But never a lamp-lit window,  
Nor smoke from a household fire ;  
No echo of music or laughter,  
No joyance of wedding bells,

## The City Where No Man Dwells

Breaks ever the mystic quiet  
Of the City Where No Man Dwells.

No host at his doorway smiling,  
With greeting of welcome, waits  
The wanderer, tired and wayworn,  
Who enters its silent gates ;  
There sounds no pean of gladness,  
But a moan of sobbed farewells,  
When a traveller seeks the shelter  
Of the City Where No Man Dwells.

No voice of the world's loud tumult,  
No bitter nor angry word,  
No discord of human striving,  
In its tranquil space is heard ;  
The spirit of peace within it  
Contention and jarring quells,  
And turmoil is all forgotten  
In the City Where No Man Dwells.

There is not, in all the city,  
A promise of gain or gold ;  
There is naught to tempt the stranger,  
And naught to be bought or sold ;  
Yet surely, sooner or later,  
The buyer, and he who sells,

## The First Red Leaf

Prince, beggar, and toiler, enter  
The City Where No Man Dwells.

The way to the silent city  
Is a wide and beaten track ;  
But of those who have found its secret,  
Not one comes ever back ;  
Albeit though snows drift deeply,  
And fiercely the tempest swells,  
The highway is always open  
To the City Where No Man Dwells.

Ah, thou of the laden shoulders,  
And thou of the heavy heart,  
There is rest in the quiet city  
Where life and its burdens part ;  
And what if no careful guide-post  
Its name or its distance tells ?  
What mortal can ever miss it, —  
The City Where No Man Dwells ?

### THE FIRST RED LEAF

**W**HAT is that which the eye perceives  
Glowing among the thick green leaves ?  
Is it an oriole, perched to rest,  
Or tanager, with his vivid vest ?  
Or a lonely grosbeak, left behind,  
Forgotten by all his gorgeous kind ?



## The First Red Leaf

Alas, for summer — and woe for me !  
'Tis the first red leaf on the dogwood tree !

Ah, why ? for the grass is not yet sere,  
No blight betokens the fading year ;  
A late rose reigns on her thorny throne,  
All the fairer because alone,  
And nods and smiles in the sunny noon  
As sweet and perfect as those of June.  
Why hint at winter and storm to be,  
O first red leaf on the dogwood tree ?

One orphaned lily leans pale and tall,  
Last of its line, by the lichened wall ;  
The salvia tosses its brilliant plume,  
The bright nasturtiums are yet in bloom,  
And dahlias, crimson, and gold, and white,  
Waste their beauty, awake all night,  
Yet here, with its sorrowful prophecy,  
Is the first red leaf on the dogwood tree !

The knapweed swings by the meadow path,  
Where mowers gather the aftermath ;  
The first pale aster has but begun  
To hint that the torrid days are done ;  
The fringy sprays of the goldenrod  
Are spreading their spendthrift wealth abroad,  
And while they charm us, we need not see  
The first red leaf on the dogwood tree !

MY AIR-CASTLE

♦ **I** BUILT a house, in my youthful dreams,  
In a sunny and quiet nook,  
Where I might listen, the whole day long,  
To the song of a gurgling brook ;  
A cottage with wide and airy rooms,  
And broad and shining floors,  
A house with the hidden charm of home  
And the freedom of out-of-doors.

Fair morning-glories climb and bloom  
In garlands along the eaves,  
And on the doorstep and window-sill  
Syringas shake their leaves ;  
And tall, old-fashioned lilacs toss  
Their purple glories high,  
While honeysuckles drop their sweets  
On every passer-by.

A hedge of sweetbrier, wet with dew,  
Makes odorous all the air ;  
The porch is starry with virgin's-bower,  
And jessamine, waxen-fair ;  
Near by, there are clumps of spicy pinks,  
And southernwood, loved of yore,  
And, red with blossoms, a climbing-rose  
Over the eastern door.

Down at the end of a winding path  
Is a group of evergreen trees,  
Pine and hemlock, and spruce and fir,  
With their resinous fragrances ;  
And truest picture of calm content  
That mortal ever saw,  
Under a low-boughed apple tree  
Is a beehive made of straw.

There is room in the garden for all the flowers  
I ever loved or knew,  
Dear common blossoms and roadside friends,  
And the florist's darlings too ;  
There is room for thickets, and beds of moss,  
And for dells of deepest shade,  
And all the birds of the summer-time  
May build there unafraid.

In and out in the shine and shade,  
A wandering brook runs clear,  
Its friends and followers, water-plants  
And rushes, crowding near ;  
Ah, one of the sweetest sounds on earth,  
Heard waking or in dreams,  
Almost as sweet as a baby's laugh, —  
Is the musical voice of streams !

How blest to sit in the fragrant shade,  
In the hush of a summer noon,

My Air-castle

To watch the bees at their happy task,  
And listen their drowsy tune ;  
A gracious balm in the soft, still air  
From the gloom where the fir boughs meet,  
And the rippling warble of bird and brook  
To make the stillness sweet !

I have pictured it all a hundred times,  
I shall do it a hundred more,  
But I never shall own the longed-for home  
With the roses over the door ;  
Never a dream of mine came true —  
It is Fate's relentless law ;  
I shall never see the apple tree,  
Nor the beehive made of straw.

I have dreamed it over a hundred times,  
I shall do it again and again,  
But I never shall see my lilac plumes  
Look in at the window pane,  
Nor smell the creamy syringa flowers,  
And the breath of sweetbrier leaves,  
Nor hear the swallows which chirp and build  
Under my friendly eaves.

But yet, in the airy realm of dreams  
Where all my riches be,  
I enter into the heritage  
That is else denied to me ;

I have but to close my eyes to find  
The Eden I never saw,  
The home, the garden, the apple tree,  
And the beehive made of straw.

MARRIED AND GONE

**D**EAD leaves heap on the window-sill,  
Dead leaves drift on the path below,  
And full of wintry, prophetic chill  
The dreary tempests of autumn blow.

Stripped of their beauty, stark and bare,  
The elm trees shiver with fear and dread,  
And moan and writhe in their dumb despair  
Of grief for the lovely summer dead.


Loneliness, like a presence, reigns  
Grim and silent, in every room ;  
Scarce a fly on the window panes  
Breaks the spell of the ghostly gloom.

Dust lies thick on the ivory keys  
Waiting mute and untouched so long ;  
Who shall waken their harmonies ?  
Who shall summon their soul of song ?

## Leah for Rachel

Slowly the days drag on and on —  
Days of gladness and light bereft ;  
Youth and music and mirth are gone —  
Gone forever — and what is left ?

### LEAH FOR RACHEL

 NCE has the April rain quickened to life  
The grass on the grave of the gentle young  
wife ;  
Now, with rejoicing, the new bride has come  
To light up the hearth of the desolate home, —  
Leah for Rachel !

She was a timid girl, loving and meek,  
Bashful her lashes and blushing her cheek, —  
This, a proud woman, within whose calm eyes  
All the cold glitter of worldliness lies, —  
Leah for Rachel !

She, one fair eve when love plead at her knee,  
Whispered, “Thine own, for I love only thee !”  
This reckoned carefully, stern-browed and cold,  
“Yes !” to his name, worldly station, and gold, —  
Leah for Rachel !

Ah, on that grave, in the fast-coming years,  
Green will the grass grow that's watered by tears, —

Tears, and the bridegroom's, — whose heart ever  
cries,  
“ A daughter of earth for a child of the skies, —  
Leah for Rachel ! ”

## LINADORE

**W**HAT became of Linadore ?  
Long ago she passed from sight,  
Leaving all she loved before,  
Vanished from us in a night ;  
Ah, her eyes were chestnut-brown,  
And her hair the richest red,  
Like a ruddy-golden crown  
Shining on her fair young head.

Merry-hearted, sweet, and gay,  
All untouched by cloud or blight,  
Why should she have fled away  
Like a shadow in the night ?  
Did a tempter lure her hence ?  
Did some cruel lover win  
That bright life from innocence  
Down to wretchedness and sin ?

Laughing, once she gave to me  
This long tress of red-gold hair ;  
“ Keep it for my sake,” said she,  
“ Since you count its hue so fair.”

Linadore

Ah, I wonder, seeing now  
All its shining length unrolled,  
Where is that unclouded brow,  
With its crown of living gold?

Lost forever, years ago ;  
If the child is living still,  
Time and change have damped the glow  
Of her youth with sobering chill ;  
If upon her garment's hem  
Stains of soiling mire have clung,  
Who shall blame her, or condemn ?  
She was motherless, — and young.

Oft my heart has cried, since then,  
Thinking of that wandering girl  
Scorned of women, spoiled of men,  
In some pitiless city's whirl,  
“Oh, come back, lost Linadore !  
You shall find one faithful friend  
Who will love you as of yore,  
Who will shield you and defend !”

I have daughters of my own,  
And I never can forget  
How her bright hair gleamed and shone  
Like a regal coronet ;



Is she tossed, a hopeless waif,  
On the sea that knows no rest ?  
Pray that she is dead, and safe  
In the clean earth's kindly breast !

So I fold the tress again  
With my memories, as before,  
Wondering with the same old pain,  
What became of Linadore ?

### JUDGMENT

**A** THUNDER-PILE rose darkly in the west,  
And all the vocal summer plain grew still ;  
Hushed was the cricket's chirp, the sparrow's  
trill,

As if all nature feared that shape of ill  
Which greated slowly, inky crest on crest,  
Hiding the lightning's arrows in its breast.

A man whose heart was black with perfidy  
And selfishness, and falsehood, — who had preyed  
On innocence, and many a trust betrayed,  
Watched the black cloud, and marked the creeping  
shade,

And trembled in his cowardice, to see  
The threatening danger that he could not flee.

## Judgment

He cowered where he sat, and was afraid ;  
The quivering purple flashes pierced his soul  
With darts of fear and terror, — and the roll  
Of thunder shook his nerves beyond control,  
And conscience woke, and tauntingly displayed  
The ruin, wrong, and misery he had made.

A redbreast in the blossomy apple tree  
Brooded upon her nest, with soft brown wings,  
Sheltering close the callow plumeless things  
So soon to join the world that flies and sings—  
With mother-love protecting tenderly,  
Fearless through innocence, her nestlings three.

“ Fear not,” her simple trusting seemed to say,  
“ My careful wings shall keep you safe and dry,  
No drop of rain shall find you where you lie ;  
Be patient till the cooling shower goes by ;  
Why should you shrink ? it is but nature’s way  
To make to-day more sweet than yesterday ! ”

The murky sky was shot with lightning-darts —  
In plashing floods the rain’s loud torrents poured ;  
From answering clouds the thunder crashed and  
roared ;  
The trembling earth was silent, and adored ;  
Wide darkness reigned, as when the day departs,  
And awe and dread lay chill on human hearts.

Sudden the storm-cloud thinned, — grew pale, and flew,  
 Sunshine burst forth ; the world was glad once more  
 With happy hymns of things which sing and soar ;  
 There bloomed a thousand flowers for one before ;  
 Again the clear high heaven shone vast and blue,  
 And all the earth and skies seemed made anew.

But silence grieved where lately songs had been ;  
 Rent and dishevelled lay the apple tree,  
 The home of innocence and harmony ;  
 Dead lay the mother-bird and nestlings three ;  
 The man whose evil heart was black within  
 Went on his way, and added sin to sin.

### EVANESCENCE

**T**HE moralist esteems it sacred duty  
 To bid the world beware  
 Of short-lived bliss and evanescent beauty,  
 And calls them false as fair.

Yet wherefore ? Since most brief and transitory  
 Is all we hold most dear ;  
 The rose has but one day of perfect glory,  
 The thorns last all the year.

The jasmine's stars, milk-white and perfume-laden,  
 Fall in a single day ;

## Evanescence

The first fresh beauty of the dawning maiden  
Pales as we whisper, "Stay!"

The scentless tulip flaunts for days, as scorning  
To quench her torch too soon,  
But moon-flowers waste their fragrance in a morning,  
And wither ere the noon.

The tender bloom upon the ripe grape-cluster,  
Our lightest touch destroys,  
So time's most gentle passing sweeps the lustre  
From all our brightest joys.

Things loveliest are still most evanescent,  
The briefest still most bright;  
The slender young moon's thinnest silver crescent  
Lasts but a single night.

The poet's fairest, most ecstatic vision  
Fades ere it can be told;  
The arching rainbow, with its hues elysian,  
Faints while we say, "Behold!"

The wafts from heaven which strengthen and refresh us,  
Pass in a moment by;  
The most elusive joy is still most precious,  
But grief will never die.

If You Should Come

So ban us not from blessings doomed to fleetness, —  
The briefest are most dear;  
The rose has but one day of full completeness,  
The thorns last all the year.

IF YOU SHOULD COME

(VIRELAI)

IF you should come to me  
As once, I would not be  
So stately, calm and cold;  
For I have come to see  
In what supreme degree  
I might believe and hold  
My lover true, and free  
From every falsity,  
And brave, and tender-souled.

“Too late, alas!” I cry;  
Ah, me, why did you fly  
So far beyond my call?  
The lonesome days go by,  
Yet still I wait and sigh;  
Steps echo in the hall,  
But never yours; ah, why,  
Why did I thus deny  
You who are more than all?

IN A THUNDER-SHOWER

THE clouds hung black, the thunder growled  
afar, —  
Down sank my heart, with dread's prophetic pain,  
Oppressed by all the ominous signs which are  
Precursors of the rain.

Not a bough stirred; not even a blade of grass;  
Even the poplar's leaves forgot to dance;  
The river's breast lay flat and smooth as glass, —  
Hushed in a breathless trance.

The awful stillness broke in flood and flame;  
The rent heaven blazed with lightning all around;  
In slanting sheets the sudden torrents came  
And deluged all the ground.

But even while the tempest flashed and roared,  
A little bird, that feared no harm nor wrong,  
Perched in my window's sheltering vine, and poured  
His whole soul in a song.

A fearless soul, a trusting, grateful soul,  
Which seemed to speak in sweet reproof to mine,  
Saying, "Why fear the thunder's jarring roll,  
The lightning's baleful shine?"

## A Morning Dream

“ Know'st thou how kind and sweet their mission ? I  
Am but a sparrow, yet I have no fear,  
I know wise Nature will not let me die  
While I can serve her here.

“ Even now the clouds divide before the sun,  
The trees are hung with brilliants of the rain,  
And all the world, now the brief storm is done,  
Is fresh and young again ! ”

### A MORNING DREAM

**T**HROUGH the fragrant wood they went  
In the morning light of June,  
While the wild flowers, dew-besprent,  
Dreamed not of the coming noon ;  
While the ferns beneath their feet,  
Cool with freshness of the night,  
Made the air so rich and sweet  
That to breathe was pure delight.

Every leaf and dancing spray  
Owned her gentle comradeship,  
Every wood-bird's joyful lay  
Found translation on her lip ;  
Every flower, and moss, and weed  
Held a message for her eyes,  
So she seemed to reach and read  
Nature's sweetest mysteries.

## A Morning Dream

He was of the world outside,  
Flattered, honored, and caressed,  
Full of selfishness and pride,  
And ambition's deep unrest ;  
Yet he felt his heart to-day  
Strongly drawn to this pure soul  
Which, despite life's dusty way,  
Kept itself so clean and whole.

It was on his tongue to say,  
"Darling, keep me thus apart  
Ever from the world's mad fray,  
Close to thine — to Nature's heart !  
Save me from life's narrower ways,  
From the greedy strife for gain,  
From the thirst for fame and praise,  
From the tumult and the pain !

"Help me to a sweet release  
From the city's pomps and lies ;  
Teach me the unworldly peace  
Shining in thy tender eyes !  
Dearest friend my heart has known !  
Long ago I dreamed thee mine ;  
Thou art love's and quiet's own —  
Let me be as wholly thine !"

Yet he spoke not. And the dream  
Vanished, with its pure desires,



## A Morning Dream

As he caught the distant gleam  
Of the city's shining spires ;  
He must win the golden fleece  
In life's maddest rush and whirl ;  
What was tame, insipid peace  
With a guileless country girl ?

As they neared the striving town,  
How his heart reached out again  
To its splendor and renown,  
To its strife of brain with brain !  
As they left the foot-path green  
Past the meadow's dewy reach,  
How the world pushed in between  
Coldly severing each from each !

When the dusty bridge was crossed,  
And they trod the stone-paved street,  
All his morning dream was lost,  
All his longings fresh and sweet ;  
Ah, how wisely he had held  
Those fond foolish words unsaid !  
He, an artist, world-compelled —  
She, a girl who toiled for bread !

FLYING HOME

**W**HEN the bird flies through miles and miles  
of space,  
Over wide woods, past leagues of sand  
and foam,

How does she know to find again the place  
The dear familiar bough that holds her home ?

All woods are green, — all living boughs have leaves  
In summer, each scarce differing from the rest,  
Yet how unerringly her eye perceives  
And her wing seeks the one that shades her nest !

How true and strong the love that counts as naught  
Hindrance, temptation, toil, and distance wide,  
And brings her back, unfailing, to the spot,  
The hidden nook where those she loves abide !

More happy far than many a human soul,  
Which, tempted from its native nest to roam  
Where cities reek and roar, or oceans roll,  
Grown tired at last, seeks all in vain for home !

A DEAD SWEETHEART

**MS** ANY a year ago  
She died and left him, in life's morning  
glow,  
And ever since has been enshrined apart  
In the most sacred chamber of his heart,  
Forever beautiful, and pure and good,  
The high ideal of sweet womanhood —  
His dear dead sweetheart.

From some height afar  
She shines upon him like a guiding star ;  
No change has touched her ; in immortal bloom  
Her youth defies the world, the years, the tomb ;  
Her lovely face, beyond compare and praise,  
Smiles on him still, as in the sweet old days —  
His dear dead sweetheart.

He is hers alone ;  
All the fair women he has seen and known  
Are dim beside that one remembered face  
Which every year endows with added grace ;  
No other love, not even the tenderest wife,  
Could fill the void she left within his life, —  
His dear dead sweetheart.

She will not grow old,  
Nor lose her charms and beauties manifold ;

## I Gave You a Ring

The spell of time will never blanch her hair,  
Nor dim her eyes, nor make her cheek less fair,  
Nor hush her lovely laugh, nor still her song,  
Nor sadden her glad heart, his whole life long —  
His dear dead sweetheart.

She will do no wrong;  
About her way no dark temptations throng,  
No sin will shadow her with guilt and shame,  
Her lips will never speak rebuke or blame;  
No real or fancied fault will ever dim  
Her whole and utter perfectness to him —  
His dear dead sweetheart.

Who would cling to life  
To be a lover's *living* love or wife,  
To dread the years, to shrink from growing old  
Lest time's sad changes make his love grow cold?  
Ah, happier far to reign with sway supreme,  
Queen of his soul and angel of his dream, —  
His dear dead sweetheart!

## I GAVE YOU A RING

(TRIOLETS)

¶ GAVE you a ring,  
A kiss on it pressing;  
A slight, simple thing;  
I gave you a ring,

## A Midwinter Night Storm

And prayed it might bring  
All manner of blessing ;  
I gave you a ring,  
A kiss on it pressing.

When I have grown gray  
Or passed beyond weeping,  
Wherever you stray  
When I have grown gray  
Still hold it, I pray,  
In sacredest keeping ;  
When I have grown gray  
Or passed beyond weeping.

## A MIDWINTER NIGHT STORM

**T**HE storm is abroad to-night, —  
The wrathful powers of the air  
Are howling in rage and might  
Like wolves driven out of their lair ;  
The legions of cloud and mist  
Have trampled the struggling light  
Afar in the troubled west,  
Till the embers all are dead  
In a dull and gray despair ;  
And the wan day sinks to rest  
In a chill and lonely bed,

## A Midwinter Night Storm

Like a motherless child unloved  
Unloved and uncomforted,  
With none to hear its prayer.

Darker the dun clouds frown,—  
And now in torrents amain  
The pitiless rain comes down,  
The ice-cold and cruel rain,  
As bitter and fierce as hail ;  
It drives like smoke on the gale,  
It smites like sleet on the pane ;  
It murmurs and sobs and sighs,  
It pelts with a rattling splash,  
It pries at the shuddering sash  
Like a robber with evil will,  
Who comes at the dead of night ;  
And the rose that blooms on the sill  
Red in the hearth-fire's light,  
Shivers as with a thrill  
Of wonderment and affright.

And the north wind shrieks and cries  
And moans like a soul in pain,  
And calling its swift allies  
From every point of the skies,  
It whirls the bewildered vane  
In a dizzying round-and-round,  
Till it groans and creaks again ;

## A Midwinter Night Storm

It rages along the ground  
And sweeps up the sodden leaves  
And hurls them against the pane ;  
It mourns and complains and grieves  
With an almost human note  
In the chimney's hollow throat ;  
While the loosened shutters crash  
As their hinges grind and strain,  
And like whips on the pouring eaves  
Beat the boughs of the doorstep tree ; —  
It tugs at the rattling gate,  
And wails like the wild banshee  
Foretelling the stroke of fate.

Ah, happy the mole to-night,  
In his snug nest underground,  
Where the tempest's angry might  
Is only a far-off sound ;  
And sweet is the chipmunk's sleep  
In his soft-lined burrow deep,  
All tapestried thick and warm,  
And safe in the wildest storm ;  
He slumbers secure, I know —  
I saw him two moons ago  
Before the November rains  
Had driven him to his keep,  
With marvellous skill and pains  
Stripping the silken skeins

## A Midwinter Night Storm

For his bed's fine drapery  
From the trunk of the savin tree.

And the small and smooth field-mouse  
That girdles the orchard trees,  
When gone is his garnered store  
And hunger presses him sore —  
Is safe in his earthy house ;  
And the lesser folk, that stay  
All winter hidden away  
Buried, forgotten, and lost  
In the brown earth's careful breast,  
Lie lapped in their peaceful rest  
Below the reach of the frost.

The owl in the hollow oak  
Unscared by the tempest's wail,  
Sleeps sound in his downy cloak,  
In spite of the roaring gale ;  
Nor once would he show surprise  
Nor open his great round eyes  
Though the voice of thunder spoke,  
And the lightning cracked the skies.

Nature befriends them all  
Who trust to her teachings wise ;  
Not one is too weak or small



## A Midwinter Night Storm

For her sheltering sympathies ;  
But ah, for the wanderer  
Who weareth a human guise —  
Afar from his own abode  
Under the black wild skies,  
How shall he keep his road  
In the driving, blinding blur  
That swirls and beats in his eyes ?

For he sees not, near or far,  
The glimmer of any star  
Nor a comforting window light ;  
From mansion, cottage, or hut  
Streams no consoling ray,  
For the careful curtains shut  
The night and the storm away,  
And the selfish shutters bar  
The gleam that would gladly stray  
Where the lost and lonely are.

Still over the roof and wall  
The torrents of rain are hurled ;  
Thick darkness envelopes all,  
And the buffeted, drowning world  
Seems lost in the grasp of night —  
Seems beaten forever away  
From the cheerful smile of day —

## The Red Flower

From the sweet and loving light —  
Blinded and bruised and dumb ;  
When will the helpful gray  
Of the tardy morning come ?

### THE RED FLOWER

**T**HE damsel took a pictured vase  
And searching wide, with care and toil,  
She heaped it full of mellow soil,  
And put it in a sunny place,  
The sunniest spot in all the room ;  
She pressed and smoothed it carefully,  
And set therein a tiny shoot  
With emerald stem and silvery root,  
And smiled, and whispered, “ I will see  
How soon my rare red flower will bloom.”

She watered it with punctual care,  
And sheltered it with loving skill  
From treacherous midnight’s creeping chill,  
And sultry noon’s too fervid glare  
Which only flatters to consume ;  
Aquarius with golden hair,  
She brought pure water from the spring,  
And gave it plenteous showering,  
With warmth, and light, and space, and air  
To win the rare red flower to bloom.

## The Red Flower

She kept all rude devouring things  
From preying on the tender plant ;  
The gnawing worm, the mining ant,  
The slug that eats, the fly that stings,  
With all their train of waste and doom ;  
No caterpillar's hairy length  
Crawled blightingly along its leaves,  
Nor aphides, those honeyed thieves,  
Nor wasp nor weevil sapped its strength,  
To keep the rare red flower from bloom.

Thus fondly nursed, it throve apace ;  
New shoots pierced through the mellow mould,  
Fresh branches grew, new leaves unrolled,  
A flower-bud greatened in its place,  
A pledge of beauty and perfume ;  
From eastern pane to south and west  
She bore it, following the sun,  
When autumn's warmer days were done,  
Saying, " My summer's toil is blest,  
For now my rare red flower will bloom."

She touched it with a half-caress,  
She held it as a precious trust ;  
She wiped from every leaf the dust,  
And loved their glossy perfectness  
More smooth than web from Lyons loom ;  
She watched the bud from day to day

If I Had but a Lovely Face

And saw a tender glow shine through  
The calyx, — then a rosier hue, —  
And smiling, said, “To-morrow’s ray  
Will see my rare red flower in bloom!”

At dawn she hastened to the place,  
Alert and eager to be first  
To see the wondrous flower-burst;  
Alas! the prized and dainty vase,  
The fair plant’s temple — and its tomb —  
In shapeless ruin met her view,  
Shivered to fragments on the floor;  
The bud was crushed, stem, sheath, and core;  
She said no word; she only knew  
Her rare red flower would never bloom!

IF I HAD BUT A LOVELY FACE

(VILLANELLE)

**I**F I had but a lovely face  
I need not languish thus alone;  
I should not pine here in my place,  
Had nature dowered me with a trace  
Of beauty such as others own —  
If I had but a lovely face.

In silks and velvets, gems and lace,  
I might reign queen on love’s bright throne;

I should not pine here in my place ;  
Even though I lacked all inward grace  
    It never would be missed or known,  
If I had but a lovely face.

I might be heartless, vain, or base,  
    Yet were I fair, it would atone ;  
I should not pine here in my place ;  
I need not grieve a moment's space  
    With heart as heavy as a stone ;  
If I had but a lovely face,  
I should not pine here in my place.

SPRING SNOW

**A**LL winter the sky was kindly,  
    With glimpses of azure sheen,  
And the hardier plants in the garden  
    Wore almost their summer green.

The chickweed was white with blossoms,  
    The clover was green and fair,  
And the honeysuckle tendrils  
    Grew fast in the humid air.

And we said, " The tyrant winter  
    For once has forgotten his power,  
Has fallen asleep like Samson  
    In a soft, unguarded hour ;

## Spring Snow

“ In the lap of the siren springtime,  
He has lain him idly down,  
While she, the lovely Delilah,  
Has shorn him of strength and crown ! ”

But when, in the bright March weather,  
Forgetful of storm and blast,  
The shrubs were budding for blossom  
And the boughs were thickening fast,

The giant awoke from his slumbers  
In a passion of rage and shame,  
And breaking the bands which bound him  
Made haste to retrieve his fame ;

For lo ! as we gazed one morning,  
With scarce believing eyes,  
The gardens and fields and hillsides  
Lay hushed in a white surprise.

Silent, and snowy, and pallid,  
The world was in winter dress,  
And the peach trees stood affrighted,  
And blushed at their forwardness.

Alas, for the sorrowful lesson  
That the freakish seasons bring —  
“ Who misses his snow in winter  
Shall have it twofold in spring ! ”

Safe with the Dead

But alas, it is nowhere written  
In truthful prose or rhyme —  
“ Who misses his flowers at May-tide  
Shall have them in winter-time ! ”

RICHMOND, VA.

SAFE WITH THE DEAD

**A**H, how I grieved when thou didst die !  
It was as if the stars in space  
Had lost their way and left the sky —  
The world turned black before my face ;  
But since the years have taught my heart  
How much life holds to fear and dread,  
That might have fallen on thy head, —  
I can be glad because thou art  
Safe with the dead.

Grief shall not sit beside thy bed,  
To break thy rest, nor spoil thy dream ;  
Nor, all too soon, the morning's red  
Awake thee, with its urgent beam,  
To tedious toil of hand or brain,  
Or throbbing ache of heart or head,  
Or pang of blame unmerited —  
Free from them all, thou shalt remain  
Safe with the dead.

Safe with the Dead

Pain shall not blanch thy lip, nor doubt  
Divide thy heart with hopes and fears ;  
Soft, restful darkness shuts about  
Thy curtained eyes, forgot of tears ;  
Ah, happy, happy eyes, since all  
Their drops of bitterness are shed !  
I am content to weep instead,  
Knowing thou art, whate'er befall,  
Safe with the dead.

Thou hast escaped life's heaviest doom —  
Thou wilt not see fond eyes grow cold  
Because thy cheek has lost its bloom ;  
Thou never wilt be tired nor old ;  
Who would not gladly share with thee  
Thy sweet immunity from dread,  
Thy bliss of peace unlimited ?  
Since thou forevermore shalt be  
Safe with the dead.

Thou never wilt be tired nor old,  
Neglected, slighted, nor oppressed,  
Nor faint with heat, nor chill with cold,  
Nor hurt by those thou lovest best ;  
The happiest soul might envy thee  
The cool green couch in shadow spread,  
By thought nor care disquieted,  
Wherein thou sleepest dreamlessly,  
Safe with the dead.



Safe with the Dead

The world's harsh voices cry in vain, —  
Their clamor cannot touch thine ear ;  
Censure, indifference, and disdain,  
Can never cause thee pang nor tear ;  
Whatever whispers rise or fall,  
By jealousy or envy sped,  
Whatever cruel words are said,  
Thou art superior to them all,  
Safe with the dead.


Fierce wars may rage, and kingdoms nod,  
Navies may sink, and empires fall,  
Or pestilence may fly abroad  
And drape the earth with shroud and pall —  
But no grim bolt of time or fate  
Can ever reach thy sacred head,  
For thou art safe — although I tread  
My darkened way disconsolate —  
Safe with the dead.

I can be thankful — for I know  
Thou art beyond all earthly harm ;  
Lightnings may smite, and whirlwinds blow,  
Volcanoes flame and floods alarm —  
The strong foundations of the hills  
Rent from their many-centuried bed,  
May sink beneath the earthquake's tread —  
What wilt thou know of earthly ills  
Safe with the dead ?

## The Lily Pond

How blest thou art! the stony way  
In which I stumble wearily,  
Slowly and sorely, day by day,  
Alone and blind, is not for thee;  
And shall I mourn because thy feet  
Beside still waters softly led,  
Escape the thorns where mine have bled?  
Nay — let me smile to know thee, sweet,  
Safe with the dead!

### THE LILY POND

 NCE — and the memory oft my dreaming  
fills —

In a low farmhouse, nestling in the breast  
Of a warm vale among New England hills,  
I found a summer week of peace and rest.

There were green fields, and flowers, and sweet-  
breath'd herds,  
And pleasant converse, and refreshing mirth,  
And whispering trees, and trills of nesting birds,  
And all the sweetest sights and sounds of earth.

There hour on hour I sat in happy rest  
On the wide door-stone smoothed by many feet,  
Watched two bright orchard orioles tend their nest,  
And gathered heavy roses, pink and sweet.

## The Lily Pond

One day a voice said, "Yonder, where the trees  
Bound the green billows of the mowing-field,  
And seem so dense with pathless mysteries,  
A sheet of crystal water lies concealed, —

"And if you pass the wood, there greets your sight  
A lovely vision, until then unguessed ;  
Great golden-hearted lilies, milky-white,  
Fragrant and fair, lie rocking on its breast."

"How beautiful!" I said, — "another day  
I will arise when dawn begins to break,  
Will thread the shadowy wood, and find the way  
To the cool border of the liliated lake."

So day on day I planned the pleasant stroll,  
And day on day delayed it, and deferred,  
So rapt was my procrastinating soul  
By friendly speech, fresh rose, and brooding bird.

Soon duty beckoned with her urgent wand,  
And labor called me from my brief, sweet rest,  
And I had never found the lily pond  
With great sweet flowers rocking on its breast,

And it remains a dream forevermore,  
A vision unattained, a joy unwon —  
Fair shining waters whispering to the shore,  
And great white lilies worshipping the sun.

SPRING IN WINTER

IT is like April to-day, — almost our charmed  
eyes have seen

All the far stretch of the hills and the near  
meadows grow green,  
Watched the brown budded trees turn browner against  
the blue sky,  
Marked the thick lilac-buds swell, while the warm  
breezes go by.

Flattering southerly wind, wooing my violet buds,  
Musical summer-like rain, pouring in mellowest  
floods,  
Waking the herbage from rest, luring the trees to  
their harm,  
Stirring the pulse of the earth with your bewildering  
charm —

Calling the rosebuds too soon, rousing the grasses to  
sprout,  
Coaxing the lilies to shoot, bidding the iris peep  
out, —  
Breaking the sleep of the year thus with your prema-  
ture call —  
Warm skies, warm wind, and warm rain, — treach-  
erous flatterers all !

Spring in Winter

It is but winter-time yet, — wherefore delude us with  
May ?

Wherefore so cruelly strive thus to deceive and be-  
tray ?

Hoar-frost to-morrow will blanch all the fair face of  
the land ;

All these red rose-sprouts will be frozen to stone  
where they stand.

All these pink buds of the peach, how they will  
wither to black !

All the brave snowdrops will die for the kind sun-  
shine they lack —

All these fresh hyacinth shoots bow down their heads  
in affright,

Chilled by the bleak, bitter wind — pinched by the  
pitiless blight.

Breathe not so sweetly, O wind ! fall not so softly,  
O rain !

Let the poor spring children go back to their slum-  
bers again !

Wherefore so cruelly strive thus to deceive and be-  
tray ?

It is but winter-time yet — wherefore delude them  
with May ?

INGRATITUDE

**I** PLANTED a rose-tree tall and fair ;  
 I watched it daily with tireless care ;  
 I guarded gently its budding germs,  
 I strove with beetles, and snails, and worms ;  
 I watered it carefully, day by day,  
 And kept the mildew and rust away ;  
 And now, behold, on the spray there glows  
 My rich rewarding — a ripe, red rose.

And yet *not* mine — for a butterfly  
 Close in my rose's breast doth lie,  
 Lovely to see, as his wings unfold,  
 Gorgeous in azure, and brown, and gold ;  
 Drunken with beauty, and bloom, and hue,  
 He breathes the fragrance and drinks the dew,  
 Nor knows, nor thanks, in his sweet repose,  
 The toil and watching which reared the rose.

Ah ! never the petted beauty dreams  
 As her fair robes shimmer in changing gleams,  
 And lend new grace to her dainty form —  
 Of the murdered moth and the plundered worm ;  
 And little she thinks, as her jewels shine,  
 Of the hapless slave in the dismal mine,  
 As the thankless butterfly recks or knows  
 Of the delver's toil who plants the rose.

## Ode to Anactoria

The poet, toiling in want and pain,  
Pours out his soul in a burning strain,  
That bursts the bounds of his cold bare walls,  
And on the world like a blessing falls,  
And many hearken, and smile, and praise,  
Mayhap, weep softly — and go their ways :  
But which among them will pause to know  
If the soul of the music were bliss or woe ?

Ah, world of butterflies, thankless all !  
Marvel and smile at the music's thrall,  
Which never is tuned with so perfect art  
As when it thrills from the tortured heart —  
Small your thought, in your pleasant sphere,  
Of him who witches your heart and ear —  
Of his aching heart and weary head  
Who pours the wine of his life for bread !

## ODE TO ANACTORIA

(SAPPHO)

**H**EEER of the gods seems he who sits beside thee,  
Hearing thy dulcet speech and lovely laugh-  
ter, —

But to behold it makes my pained heart flutter  
Wild in my bosom.

## Ode to Monotony

For when I see thee but a little moment,  
Stilled is my tongue — I have no speech nor lan-  
guage —

I am on fire with jealousy and envy,  
Deafened and blinded.

Trembling and weak, I palpitate and falter,  
All my faint frame bedewed with drops of anguish ;  
Paler than grass blanched white with summer dryness —  
Frenzied, half-dying.

## ODE TO MONOTONY

**M**YMPH with gray robe and quiet eyes  
Hazy and mild, like autumn skies,  
Whose slow and level-stepping feet  
Fall like the rain's soft lulling beat  
When no wind stirs the wingèd mill,  
And even the poplar's leaf is still, —  
Tired of the world's discordant noise,  
Wearied with clashing griefs and joys,  
Fain would I rest awhile with thee,  
Soother of souls, Monotony !

No pain nor passion nor unrest  
Disturbs thy cool and tranquil breast ;  
No haunting fears beset thy path,  
Nor blinding joy, nor furious wrath ;



## Ode to Monotony

No sudden shock nor thrilling start  
Hastens or halts thy steady heart ;  
Thy pulses neither pause nor bound  
From their serene, unvarying round ;  
Happy the mortal who with thee  
Walks hand in hand, Monotony !

Let others agonize and yearn,  
Exult and suffer, freeze and burn,  
Sing on the hills of hope to-day,  
To-morrow sit in mire and clay,  
Laugh with the morning's joyful light,  
On tear-wet pillows writhe at night,  
To-day be worshipped on a throne,  
To-morrow left to grieve alone, —  
These wide extremes are not for me, —  
Grant me thy calm, Monotony !

Alone upon some peaceful plain  
Where neither flood nor hurricane  
Nor thunder's crash, with wild alarm,  
Should break the summer's languorous charm,  
But silent dews, and mellow heat  
Of temperate sunshine, mild and sweet,  
And slow airs breathing low and clear,  
Should fill the even, perfect year —  
How blest it were to dwell with thee,  
Healer of hearts, Monotony !

## Out of the Cold

Where life may flow in quietness  
Free from both rapture and distress,  
Where, gliding each like each away,  
Fades uneventful day on day,  
Whose only points of difference are  
Their places on the calendar ;  
Where free from tumult, mirth, and tears,  
The gracious weeks, and months, and years,  
Like clouds dissolving into haze,  
Lapse softly into yesterdays,  
Smooth, colorless, unvarying,  
As pearls slip on a silken string !

### OUT OF THE COLD

**T**HE summer is dead and vanished — the autumn  
is growing old —

Take in the daintier flowers out of the coming  
cold ;

Fragile and delicate lilies, which cannot endure the chill,  
When the wintry blasts are blowing, and the snow  
whirls down the hill ;

Tenderly tinted tea-roses, heavy with richest scent,  
Jasmine impassioned with fragrance, and pinks with  
their fair heads bent,

The tall geranium's scarlet, the passion-vine's clinging  
grace,

And make for them all in the windows a sunny,  
summery place ;

So shall their green luxuriance, so shall their varied  
bloom,  
All through the dreary winter gladden our pleasant  
room.


Take in the baby Gracie, loveliest summer-child,  
All through the months of blossom, wandering garden-  
wild,  
Dazzled by many flowers, wondering which to pull,  
Shaking the petals about her and filling her apron full —  
Talking to moths and beetles — seeming to hear  
replies,  
Holding her white wrist softly up to the butterflies,  
Coaxing them sweetly to settle and show their beautiful  
wings —  
Mimicking birds and insects, and loving all innocent  
things ;  
Wrap her in dainty fabrics, garments all soft and fair,  
Keep her in warmth and comfort safe from the bitter  
air.

But where is the other darling, cherished so long ago ?  
She comes not in by the fireside while the blinding  
tempests blow —  
Where are the golden tresses, where are the tender  
eyes  
Bright as the summer sunshine, blue as the summer  
skies ?

⊙ Fire-flies, Trim your Lamps

How can we bear to leave her wrapped in the chilly  
mould,  
Buried away from the home light under the snow-  
drifts cold?  
Needing no longer our fondness, our tireless and  
loving care —  
Our beautiful babe, Gertrudie, whose days were so few  
and fair —  
Gone from our endless yearning, gone from our cease-  
less call,  
Where never the winters darken and never the blossoms  
fall.

○ FIRE-FLIES TRIM YOUR LAMPS ANEW

 FIRE-FLIES, trim your lamps anew,  
And light their gold-green blaze,  
O stars, send softly from the blue  
Your brightest silver rays,

O moon, by fleecy vapors crossed,  
Shine out, and shine for me,  
And help me find the heart I lost  
Beneath the lilac tree!

We sat beneath it, yesternight,  
And saw the gloaming creep  
Along the valley, up the height,  
Across the purple deep;

And when the moment came to part —  
Alas, how could it be?  
I felt that I had lost my heart  
Beneath the lilac tree!

So, fire-flies, gleam, and planets, shine,  
O moon, be kind to me,  
And help me find this heart of mine  
Beneath the lilac tree!

### ONE WOMAN

**S**HE has no kindred of her own,  
She asks no odds of love or hate,  
But grasps the iron hand of fate  
And walks her cheerless way alone.

Yet once her withered face was young,  
Her heart was like a summer bird,  
She dwelt in happy dreams, and heard  
The songs by Hope and Fancy sung.

She loved as women rarely love,  
And then their hearts break, or they die;  
How dear he was! when none were by  
She kissed his ring, his scarf, his glove,

She prized the flower he cast aside,  
The leaf his restless hand had torn,

## The Night Wind

The very garment he had worn ;  
Yet love was not so strong as pride.

Some light and trifling difference fell  
Between their hearts, so fond before ;  
The shadow darkened more and more,  
Until they met to say farewell.

They talked of trifling things, — they laughed,  
Although in Pride's grim vinegar-cup  
Love's pearl lay melting slowly up,  
Dissolved in the accursed draught,

Even as they drank ; their hearts the while  
Were writhing with their hidden pain ;  
And then they touched cold hands again  
And parted with a careless smile.

And so the precious tie was riven  
Never again to reunite,  
And from her life its one dear light  
Dropped, like a dead star out of heaven.

## THE NIGHT WIND

**T**HE night wind cries at the shutter,  
And knocks at the bolted door,  
It wails at the curtained window  
As waves wail on the shore ;

## The Night Wind

It moans and sobs in the chimney,  
It whispers along the eaves,  
And in every nook and crevice  
It murmurs, complains, and grieves.

“I am here,” it sighs, “to tell you  
Of every grief you have known;  
Of the ache of hopeless waiting,  
Of the pain endured alone;  
Of the happiness that missed you,  
Of the peace that might have been;  
Of the dreams which fled with morning,—  
Open, and let me in!”

Ah, whence did it learn the stories  
It tells in the lonesome nights,  
Of trial, and grief, and losses,  
Old sorrows and dead delights?  
Of poverty, toil, and heart-break,  
Of bitterness, blight, and tears,  
The ever increasing burden  
Of life and the lapsing years?

It whispers of faith mistaken,  
Of falsehood and slighted trust,  
Of sacraments sealed in sorrow,  
Of idols which lie in dust;  
It tells them over and over,  
The stories of woe and pain,

Ode to Aphrodite

And makes me listen and tremble  
And suffer them all again.

Oh, wind of the lonesome midnight !  
I hear you, and dread to hear ;  
I listen to all you utter,  
And shiver with shrinking fear :  
Why scourge me with wild upbraiding ?  
And wherefore, with cruel art,  
Reëcho it over and over,  
The anguish I know by heart ?

ODE TO APHRODITE

(SAPPHO)

**G**REAT Queen of Love, immortal Aphrodite,  
Daughter of Zeus, and weaver of enchantments,  
Break not my spirit with distress and anguish —  
Hear me, O Goddess !

As thou didst once attend my call and hearken,  
Leaving behind thy father's golden mansion,  
While in thy chariot fair fleet sparrows drew thee,  
Flapping their pinions

Round the dark earth, down through the middle ether,  
Quickly arrived they ; and thou, blessed Goddess,  
Shining upon me with thy smile immortal,  
Askedst me softly —



The Meadow Sheaves

“What has befallen? wherefore dost thou call me?  
What does thy mad heart now desire and pray for?  
What wondrous beauty wouldst thou draw to love thee?  
Who wrongs thee, Sappho?”

“Even if thy lover flies, he soon shall follow;  
If he rejects gifts, yet he soon shall give them;  
And if he loves not, he shall surely love thee,  
Even though unwilling.”

Come now, I pray thee, even as then thou camest;  
From all these cruel cares and pains release me;  
All that my heart desires do thou accomplish,  
Help, Aphrodite!

THE MEADOW SHEAVES

**G**RADUAL, slow, like the gathering haze,  
Is the subtle change from the summer days;  
Leaves still whisper in forest ways,  
But the sheaves are gone from the meadow.

Even yet there are flowers in bloom;  
Restless tosses the aster's plume,  
Though October has sighed its doom,  
And the sheaves are gone from the meadow.

Vainly, fondly would we delay  
Every smile of the golden day,

## The Blush-rose

Roadside blossom and leafy spray,  
Yet the sheaves are gone from the meadow.

Tender tints may illumine the skies,  
Richest odors may drift and rise, —  
All the beauty of Paradise  
Cheat and flatter in summer's guise,  
Yet the sheaves are gone from the meadow!

### THE BLUSH-ROSE

**A**MONG the garden beauties  
My childhood prized as best,  
The dear old-fashioned blush-rose bush  
Was first and loveliest ;  
It bore the coldest winter blasts,  
The summer's fiercest blaze,  
And every year made sweeter still  
June's long delightful days.

The dear old-fashioned blush-rose  
My little-girlhood knew —  
No florist names it in his list,  
Nor vaunts its form and hue ;  
It had no famous pedigree,  
It wore no lordly name,  
But ah, no rose of later years  
Has ever seemed the same.

## The Blush-rose

Unmarked by stake or label,  
In humble innocence,  
A small low-spreading shrub, it grew  
Beside the dooryard fence;  
The dear old-fashioned blush-rose bush  
That flourished anywhere,  
Among the weeds or in the grass,  
With no one's help or care.

Its pointed buds were snowy,  
But when the calyx thin  
Turned back, the outer petals spread,  
And showed the flush within;  
Ah, what a lovely flower-heart!  
Its breath was sweetest balm,  
Its hue the faintest pink that tints  
A baby's tender palm.

In many a gorgeous garden  
May fairer flowers unfold,  
Strange orchids, and exotics rare,  
Which cost their bulk in gold;  
But none can rival in my heart  
The flower I loved of yore,  
The dear old-fashioned rose that grew  
Beside my mother's door!

THE LAST LETTER

**B**EST beloved, beyond your sight,  
Where the hills are bleak and white,  
One whose faint and faltering feet  
Walk where light and shadow meet,  
One whose true heart never knew  
Any other love but you,  
Whispers, on her death-bed lying,  
“Love me, love, for I am dying!

“Though the welcoming angels wait  
Leaning from the shining gate, —  
Though their kind hands, reaching down,  
Offer me life’s fadeless crown;  
I would yield it, even now,  
For your kiss upon my brow!  
Crush me not with cold denying,  
Love me, love, for I am dying!

“Many a league of flood and plain  
Stretches wide between us twain,  
Traversed only by my thought  
Out of love and anguish wrought;  
Yet my voice shall tremble through  
All dividing space to you,  
Like an echo’s low replying,  
Love me, love, for I am dying!

“Though sweet voices call to me  
From the land of mystery  
Where the sorrowing heart finds peace,  
And all weary achings cease ;  
Still, my soul, which cannot view  
Any heaven away from you,  
Will not hush its bitter crying,  
Love me, love, for I am dying !”

### TRUE PROPHECY

“ And yet I whisper — As God will —  
And in His hottest fire, hold still.”

“**L**O, all things may be borne,” she sighed in  
youth,  
When storms beat fast and fierce about her  
head ;

The years have made a stern prophetic truth  
Of what her inexperienced spirit said.

For she was born beneath a baleful star  
Whose light has led her on through thorns and  
briers,  
Over lone wastes where stinging reptiles are —  
Nettles, and sharp-edged stones, and smouldering  
fires.

## True Prophecy

Those grim marauders, Falsehood, Time, and Death,  
Have robbed her as they cannot rob her more ;  
If every soul now drawing mortal breath  
Should pass, she could not grieve as heretofore.

The wretch at midnight broken on the wheel,  
Heeds not the stinging of a gnat at morn ;  
The rack-wrenched victim's flesh would hardly feel  
The tiny puncture of a rose's thorn.

Bereavement, loneliness, neglect, and pain,  
Toil, exile, poverty, denials sore,  
She knows them all ; they never can again  
Inflict the agonies they brought of yore.

No fiery dart, no falchion's flash and fall,  
No dagger-thrust can make her shrink or moan ;  
There is no weapon in life's arsenal  
Whose keenest edge she has not felt and known.

And now, before her hair is white, she stands  
Where no new grief can ever touch her more —  
Not all the legions under Fate's commands  
Can wreak on her a pang unfelt before.

So, isolate in sad security,  
She sees the bolts of doom about her fall ;  
Hailstones and coals of fire heap harmlessly  
Around her feet — and she contemns them all.

For she has proved that all things may be borne  
In silence, by a steadfast soul's strong will,  
And Fate herself be wearied and outworn  
If the unflinching spirit but "hold still."

TWO SOULS

**R**EMOTE from this dull planet's night and noon,  
Two spirits met, and on each other gazed,  
As mortals, wandering on a foreign shore,  
Gaze on a form met haply long before ;  
His face was sad, and fierce, and sore amazed —  
Hers, like a white rose smiled on by the moon.

Her eyes were fair with tenderness and truth,  
And that deep peace which cannot fade away ;  
A roseate light was on her wide white wings ;  
Her face was rapt, like that of one who sings  
The songs of heaven ; and on her brow there lay  
The radiant beauty of immortal youth.

The other was unlovely to the view —  
His face was lined with age, and drawn with pain ;  
He moved but gropingly, as if in dread ;  
Darkness was in his eyes, and round his head,  
And on his forehead was a scarlet stain,  
And on his breast the mark of the untrue.

## Two Souls

Tall, slender, pliant, graceful as a flame,  
She stood before him, with the tender light  
That smiles are made of, gathering on her face,  
Which, when he saw, he cowered in his place,  
As if he would have shrunken from her sight,  
And hidden all his wretchedness and shame.

“Nay, turn not from me,” said the shining Soul,  
“The stamp of yonder world thou still dost wear —  
I have forgotten all its grief and sin ;  
The pain to me is as it had not been ;  
It is as if I bruised my finger there,  
Which now again is beautiful and whole.

“I am at peace, — my joy is memory ;  
My children’s kisses live on cheek and brow ;  
Their graceful growth, their loving, sportive ways  
Make sweet the thought of all my earthly days ; —  
I was amid their happy smiles but now,  
And in a moment, they will come to me.

“And all things which were beautiful and dear  
In my brief space of toil and waiting there —  
The grace and sweetness of the trees and flowers,  
The laugh of streams, the voice of dancing  
showers,  
The song of birds, the summer’s gracious air,  
Deathless through dying, still delight me here.



“ Only the joys of that existence seem  
To linger with me, in this life complete ;  
The bliss of help conferred, of duties done,  
The smiles I earned, the love I gave and won,  
The mortal faces which were dear and sweet —  
And all the rest is as a faded dream.”

“ Alas ! ” he said, “ my curse is memory —  
Would I could cast her burden from my soul !  
She haunts me like a fierce avenging shape  
Which I can neither conquer nor escape ;  
The gnawing anguish of remorse and dole,  
In all its bitterness, remains with me.

“ A face, made wan and sad by love of me,  
Though once it shone on me with tenderest  
light —  
Hers whose true heart I broke, and brought to  
shame, —  
Forever follows me, with piteous blame ;  
The sound of her faint sobbing in the night,  
Which once I fled from, now I cannot flee.

“ Those for whose sake I wronged and slighted her,  
Are now the taunting shapes whose smiles I hate ;  
Their foul distorted souls I always see ;  
The echo of her weeping tortures me ;  
I hear her smothered sighs disconsolate —  
And all the rest is mist, and doubt, and blur.”

## The Vine and the Lily

A tide of wondrous music floated by,  
Sweet as the harp notes of the seraphim, —  
And on its waves she seemed to float away  
As a star melts into the dawn of day;  
Yet, ere she passed, a moment shone on him,  
And whispered, “Grieve no longer — it was I!”

### THE VINE AND THE LILY

**A**T the foot of a boulder mossed and gray,  
In a hillside garden, a lily grew,  
The fairest child of the summer day;  
A lily lovely in form and hue,  
Scarlet and gold in the light and dew,  
The wonder of all who came that way,  
So tall was the graceful lily.

A grape-vine dwelt on the boulder's crest,  
And clung and climbed on a walnut tree,  
With tendrils reaching in eager quest;  
He saw her beauty, — “How fair!” said he,  
“How fairer than all her kin is she,  
The tallest, sweetest, and loveliest!”  
And he bent to greet the lily.

“O, come,” he whispered, “and climb with me  
Aloft in the upper light and air!  
The evening moth and the morning bee

## The Vine and the Lily

Shall never follow and rob thee there,  
And thou shalt reign as the fairest fair,  
And I will love thee and only thee ! ”

Thus the vine made love to the lily.

Stooping, he proffered a tendril ring ;  
Over her freedom it lightly fell,  
Soft, caressing, yet strong to cling,  
It circled her like a magic spell,  
Playful, but powerful ; — was it well  
That thus, like the beggar-wooing king,  
The vine made love to the lily ?

Alas, that the clasp of love can be  
Another name for the grip of fate !  
Alas, that the wooer could not see  
That even a lily in regal state  
Was never fitting and equal mate  
For a headstrong clamberer such as he !  
Yet the vine made love to the lily.

Closer and closer, day by day,  
He clasped her beauty, her strength, her grace,  
He broke her hold of her mother clay,  
And dragged her roots from its fond embrace,  
Until she died in her pleasant place —  
Alas ! and this was the fatal way  
The vine made love to the lily !

## The Ludovicean Juno

And thus it will be to the end of time,  
When nature strives with an alien tie ;  
The lily can never be taught to climb,  
Even by love, to the tree-top high,  
Nor the vine in color and fragrance vie  
With the stately darling of prose and rhyme —  
The queenly and graceful lily.

### THE LUDOVICEAN JUNO

**W**HERE the Eternal City slowly crumbles  
Beneath the soft and treacherous hand  
of time,

Which hallows for awhile, then mocks and humbles  
To mouldering ruins what was once sublime,

An ancient palace, known in song and story,  
Still lifts its ivied walls in lonely state,  
And whispers strange, and ghosts of former glory,  
Lurk in its lofty halls disconsolate.

Near by, unvexed by noise or rude intrusion,  
Lies the most beautiful of sylvan vales,  
Tangled with trailing vines, a sweet seclusion,  
Dream-haunted, and beloved of nightingales.

The dark sweet-violet there its heart uncloses,  
The fragrant air is musical with bees,

And all the sod pranked white with wedding-roses,  
And pink and purple with anemones.

Bowered within this green and balmy pleasance,  
By strangers rarely sought, and found by few,  
Dwells, solitary, one immortal presence,  
Untouched by change, the wearing seasons through.

A marble face of wondrous strength and sweetness,  
The face of ripe and royal womanhood,  
Proud, tender, perfect in its rare completeness,  
It charms and sanctifies the solitude.

Strong arms of ivy, lover and defender,  
Embrace and drape its pedestal and base,  
And storms have stained, not marred the regal splen-  
dor  
Of that most beautiful and noble face.

Ah, Fate! though many a joy from me you sever,  
I thank you for one precious gift of grace, —  
To see and keep in memory forever  
The haunting beauty of that marvellous face!

DOES SHAKSPEARE CARE ?

**D**OES Shakspeare care, if haply still he lives  
A conscious soul, for all the wealth of praise,  
The ceaseless plaudits which this small world  
gives

To the achievements of his earthly days ?  
Does it delight him, this unbounded fame,  
This constant eulogy from old and young,  
The fact that little children lisp his name,  
And grandsires utter it with reverent tongue ?  
If he has gained, since he was here on earth,  
New stores of wisdom, genius, power, and truth,  
Mayhap he values at as trifling worth  
As the forgotten scribbling of his youth,  
The work that saves him from the common fate,  
And makes his outgrown sphere pronounce him great.

If in the distant village where I dwelt  
A school child, some chance hand should bring to  
light  
The blotted page whereon with toil I spelt  
The first small words which children learn to write,  
A page with blunders and erasures filled,  
With faltering flourishes and crooked lines,  
The rude, cramped tracing of a hand unskilled  
In simplest lore of written language signs, —

And if the children, dwelling there to-day,  
Upon that blurred, imperfect page should look,  
And with delight and admiration say,  
“How wondrous well she wrote her copy-book!”  
Would it be sweet to me, their blind acclaim?  
Yet what more value has posthumous fame?

WHERE ARE THEY?



TELL us where the friends have gone,  
The friends we used to know,  
So joyful in our happiness,  
So tender in our woe?  
With hands so warm, with hearts so true,  
The friends of long ago?  
Through frost and fire we knew their love  
Would never fail or veer;  
We trusted them with perfect faith,  
Untouched by doubt or fear;  
*These* lukewarm souls can never be  
The friends we held so dear?

O tell us where the flowers grow  
Which youth's fresh May-days knew?  
So full of fragrance honey-sweet,  
So fair of form and hue,  
So musical with wooing bees,  
So cool with morning dew?

## Where Are They

*These* flowers are pallid, scentless things ;  
They lack the tint and glow  
Of those we used to weave and wear  
Ere life had saddened so ;  
They seem the dim pale ghosts of those  
We loved so long ago !

O where the blooming faces now,  
We owned in days gone by ?  
The warm rich hue of cheek and lip,  
Soft as the rose's dye,  
The glory of the golden hair,  
The radiance of the eye ?  
*These* clouded brows can never be  
The same we knew before ?  
These eyes are sad, — these pallid cheeks  
Mock at the rose no more ;  
*These* faded faces cannot be  
The same which once we wore ?

O tell us where the hearts have fled,  
We had in youth's bright day ?  
They were not like the heavy aches  
Which load our breasts to-day —  
So full of heedless happiness,  
So free from grief were they !  
The hearts we carry now are sad,  
And full of dread and care,



## A Faithful Heart

Songless and cold ; they cannot be  
The hearts we used to bear ?  
Where are the joys of other years ?  
Where is youth's glamour ? Where ?

### A FAITHFUL HEART

**W**HEREVER I am led by fate  
In regions far and desolate,  
Or in the hurrying crowd, more rude  
And alien still than solitude,  
One blessed truth, in shine and storm,  
Consoles my heart and keeps it warm ;  
One tender soul, through good and ill,  
Remembers, holds, and helps me still.

In mountain gorge, on sultry plain,  
In arid wastes, unblest by rain,  
Or selfish cities, lonelier far  
Than wilderness and desert are,  
One face is ever by my side,  
My shield and buckler, friend and guide,  
A face that none but I can see, —  
The face of her who thinks of me.

Though miles and miles stretch wearily  
Between that faithful heart and me,  
I know its unforgetting grace  
Can bridge all distance, time, and space,

## Two Moons

Can send a blessing from afar,  
However wide my wanderings are,  
And be, wherever I may stray,  
My fire by night, my cloud by day.

I spread my blanket on the ground  
Remote from human sight and sound,  
And as my senses swim to sleep  
Amid the silence wide and deep,  
The wind by which my cheek is fanned  
Seems like her kind, caressing hand,  
And in each watching star, I see  
The face of her who prays for me.

O tender light, shine softlier yet!  
O watchful eyes, do not forget!  
O faithful heart, my strength renew,  
And hold me safe, and keep me true!  
O gentle face, still kindly beam,  
Sustain my soul, inspire my dream,  
Be now and always, near and far,  
My hope, my guide, my polar star!

## TWO MOONS

**T**HE evening moon belongs to peace and rest,  
To dewy fragrances and tender airs  
Sweet with the last soft breath of shutting  
flowers;

## Two Moons

To birds grown tired with singing all day long ;  
To firefly sparkles, moths with silver wings,  
And all the beauteous things which fly by night ;  
To happy lovers, who in shadowy ways  
Walk hand in hand and plan the sweet To-Be ;  
To play-tired children at their drowsy prayers ;  
To tender mothers hushing babes to sleep ;  
To loving fathers, glad of rest and home ;  
To languid flowers, grateful for the dew ;  
To all things peaceful, innocent, and sweet,  
Belongs the mild and gracious evening moon.

But ah, the sad and ominous morning moon !  
To evil things which prowl in search of prey,  
When all the world is in its deepest sleep ;  
To shameful revellers who dread the sun ;  
To sufferers worn with pain and weariness,  
Counting with groans the slowly dragging hours ;  
To hovels where grim hunger murders rest ;  
To pining souls afar from love and home ;  
To watchers tending an expiring life ;  
To hearts wherein some sleepless sorrow gnaws ;  
To prisoners laboring at a dungeon's bar ;  
To poverty, and grief, and guilt, and pain,  
And all the evil brood that shuns the day,  
Belongs the melancholy morning moon.

WHY?

**W**HY should a regal soul like this  
Dwell in a form so poor and plain?  
Why should one so attuned to bliss  
Droop forever in gloom and pain?

Why should a warm and loyal heart  
Seek all vainly to find its own,  
Meeting never its counterpart,—  
And live its desolate life alone?

Why should a spirit that spurns the ground,  
Scorns the sordid, and prays for wings,  
Drudge forever in one dull round  
Of grinding labor at paltry things?

Why should the artist-eyes which love  
Beauty, symmetry, color, grace,  
Fade in dimness and tears, above  
The dust and murk of the commonplace?

Why should a hand that never wrought  
Wrong or loss to a soul on earth,  
Grasp but shadows, and toil for naught,  
Always empty, in woe and dearth?

## Trees Felled in Winter

Why, ah, why ? But no answering word,  
Airy whisper, or faint reply  
Out of the silent night is heard, —  
Only echo responds, “ Ah, why ? ”

### TREES FELLED IN WINTER

**T**HE fated elm trees shudder where they stand,  
And soon, uprooted by the murderous spade,  
Fall helpless, and beneath the chopper's hand,  
In frozen lengths their stately height is laid.

Poor lopped dishonored corpses ! Well indeed  
May Nature's self deplore her darlings slain,  
Through many seasons nursed with tender heed  
Of warmth and light, fresh wind, and welcome rain.

Alas, that vandal hands should tear away  
The “ ancient landmarks ” dear to other days,  
And spoil the verdurous temples in a day,  
Which Nature took so many years to raise !

She counted time well spent which went to spread  
Their leafy splendors wider and more wide ;  
She grudges not the springs and summers fled,  
So her fair world is helped and beautified.

## Toward Sunset

Some wrongs may be effaced by timely tears,  
By penalty, or penitential pain,  
But ah, not grief, nor gold, nor fourscore years,  
Can buy this priceless beauty back again!

When soon the earth shall feel, in every vein,  
The spring's revitalizing currents creep,  
Will not the powers of light and air complain  
For these, their children, murdered in their sleep?

## TOWARD SUNSET



FATE! whose stern behest  
So often seems to be  
To human souls so partial and unfair,  
Up from my patient breast  
Rises one cry to thee —  
Pause for a moment, and attend my prayer —  
The plea oft poured in vain  
Hear once again!

Thou led'st me forth to doom,  
Not over flowery meads,  
But wastes of nettles, thick with thorns and briers;  
Give me one touch of bloom  
To grace the stretch of weeds,  
Ere the damp darkness dim day's fainting fires —  
Now, ere the dull day close,  
Give me one rose!

Thou hast been pleased to make  
My way a lonely road,—  
Not the highway of common woes and fears ;  
And I have borne the ache  
Of solitude — the load  
Which must be borne in silence, with no tears ;  
Now, ere the journey end,  
Give me a friend !

Thou hast decreed for me  
All restlessness and change,—  
Brief tarryings under roofs which are not mine ;  
Thrice blessed would it be  
If, doomed no more to range,  
I might at last sit by my own hearth-shine !  
Bid me no longer roam,  
Give me a home !

But if my prayer should meet  
Thy frown, severe and grave,  
The stern denial I have often known,  
There is one guerdon sweet  
I will not cease to crave,  
Knowing that soon or late, 'twill be my own ;  
When these wide wanderings cease,  
Oh, give me peace !

THE CALL OF THE FULL MOON

**W**HEN tired of day's discordant din  
I seek repose, as night shuts in,  
Soon as I close my willing eyes,  
"Sleep not! Sleep not!" the Full Moon cries.  
"Why wake through all the tiresome day,  
And sleep the fairer night away?  
Come out and see me dawn and rise,  
And soar in triumph up the skies!  
A silver bubble newly blown,  
To float through infinite space alone,  
A phantom born of light and grace,  
With ether for my dwelling-place!

"Sleep not! Sleep not! Awake with me!  
Behold, I reign right royally!  
How dense and deep the shadows are!  
How spectre-faint shines every star,  
As my strong glory dims and drowns  
The radiance of their diamond crowns!  
I gild the walls, the roofs, the spires,  
I light the panes with pallid fires;  
The mellow splendor that I wear  
Makes the remembered sunshine's glare  
Seem common, crude, and little worth,  
While I transfigure heaven and earth.



## The Call of the Full Moon

“Sleep not!” the Full Moon cries to me,  
“Come forth, and watch the yearning sea,  
While on its slowly heaving breast  
Forever sleepless, though at rest,  
The long waves roll, but never break,  
As dreamers toss, but do not wake;  
My marvellous lustre, as it streams  
Across their shimmering surface, seems  
A silver serpent, stretching far  
Beyond the beacon and the bar,  
Crinkling in curves and coils of light,  
Yet never winding out of sight.”

The Full Moon hath a mystic sway  
That none who feel can disobey,  
A subtle influence, weird and deep,  
That, like the Thane, doth murder sleep;  
When she proclaims her high behest  
There is no slumber and no rest;  
Constrained by her compelling rays  
The drowsy eye must wake and gaze,  
The drooping frame must rise and go,  
The weary feet pace to and fro;  
Body and soul must vigil keep  
When the Full Moon says, “Do not sleep!”

THE WIND AND THE LEAF

THE south wind came and whispered to the leaf,  
“Come forth, O lovely leaf, and rove with  
me!

Even now the grain is gathered in the sheaf, —  
Summer’s remaining days are few and brief;  
Come forth and see their beauty, ere they flee!

“Come forth and see the wondrous world with me,  
The brilliant world, the strange and various world;  
Stay not thus fettered to this tyrant tree,  
That holds thee fast, and makes a slave of thee;  
Wherefore thy wings, if thou but keep’st them  
furled?”

The fair leaf heard, and trembled in her place;  
His honeyed whispers thrilled her being through;  
Her light shape fluttered in his soft embrace —  
Ah, could he woo so sweet, and yet be base?  
Ah, could he kiss so warm, and not be true?

The parent tree, with many a loving wile,  
Dropping her dew, like tear-drops, in the dust,  
Whispered a warning of deceit and guile:  
The leaf drooped, wavering in doubt awhile —  
Faint doubt, that ended in a blinder trust!

## The Wind and the Leaf

Softly she soared ; the world seemed love and mirth —  
The sky how blue and near — the light how fair !  
Far from the lowly grass and sordid earth,  
Far from the sighing bough that gave her birth —  
How could she ever have been happy there ?

Ah, joyous flight, where all was bright and new !  
Ah, happy sense of new-found pinions free !  
Softly she soared and floated, sailed and flew ;  
Almost she reached the sky's alluring blue —  
But when the early dark came, where was she ?

Alas ! it has been and will be again !  
The poor bruised leaf lay sodden in the mould,  
Soiled, stained, and trodden under foot of men,  
And neither might nor miracle could then  
Restore the peace and innocence of old.

Gone were the days of sweet security  
Among her mates, beside the cottage eaves ;  
Forsaken by her tempter utterly,  
The hapless leaf was left to die, — while he  
Was flattering other fond and foolish leaves !

THE TIME TO COME

**Y**OU praise my garden's gorgeous hues,  
Its plenty and perfume ;  
You scarcely know which flower to choose  
In all its waste of bloom ;  
But ah, not one is half so fair  
As those which I shall rear  
In softer rains and milder air,  
Some kindlier future year !

What we have done is poor and small ;  
It humbles us to know  
How far our best achievements fall  
Our high intents below ;  
But ah, how beautiful and grand,  
How noble and how true,  
The work which waits our hastening hand —  
The deeds which we shall do !

I know how poor and faltering seem  
The songs which I have sung ;  
They wrong and shame the glorious dream  
I dreamed when life was young ;  
But never poet's soul rejoiced  
To win from sounding string  
Such music as those strains unvoiced,  
The songs which I shall sing !

“Help Thou Mine Unbelief”

To-day my life is bare of flowers  
As winter's barren length,  
And toil and care usurp my powers,  
And steal my noblest strength;  
But ah, how beautiful and free,  
With all that heaven can give  
Of peace, and love, and light, will be  
The life that I shall live!

“HELP THOU MINE UNBELIEF”



IF we could only know it  
As we know the sun brings light,  
Could know of a life hereafter  
Beyond death's seeming night,  
Could grasp, in our daily struggle  
With trial, and toil, and grief,  
Some surer and stronger comfort  
Than “Help Thou mine unbelief!”

Is death an unending slumber?  
Most surely, if so it be,  
The beasts of the wood and meadow  
Are happier far than we;  
They know not the crowding sorrows  
Which compass us round about,  
The anguish that comes of loving,  
And the gnawing pain of doubt.

“Help Thou Mine Unbelief”

'Tis a grand and beautiful story  
By fond enthusiasts told,  
Of a holier life hereafter,  
Where griefs shall be all consoled —  
Where the heavy clouds of error  
Which prison and blind us here,  
Shall pass, like the mists of morning,  
From the soul's horizon clear —

When the light of heaven shall scatter  
The shadows of sin and pain,  
And our eyes shall see its glory  
“Clear shining after rain.”  
When hearts shall forget their aching,  
And tears shall no longer flow,  
And we shall not doubt, nor question,  
Nor hope, nor believe, — but *know!*

But oft in our darker moments  
In times of our sorest need,  
We summon our faith to lean on,  
And find it a broken reed ;  
A feeble and false dependence  
That yields at the slightest blow,  
And leaves us to moan, despairing,  
“O, if we could only know!”

To even the best and strongest  
These seasons of darkness come,

## Phaon, the Ferryman

When confidence fails and falters,  
And the lips of faith are dumb ;  
We dream of that life immortal,  
And long for its dawning glow,  
We trust, with a half-reliance, —  
But — if we could only know !

What then were the heaviest sorrows  
Which burden the human breast ?  
The veriest dust of the balance,  
Had we the assurance blest  
Of a nobler life hereafter,  
Afar from this realm of woe,  
In the light of peace undying—  
O, if we could only know !

### PHAON, THE FERRYMAN

**P**HAON, long renowned for his skill in rowing,  
When no longer young, kept a lonely ferry ;  
Patient and untired waited he for passers  
Needing his service.

Kind he was, and just, in his humble calling,  
Taking fees alone from the rich and happy,  
Making no demand of the poorer pilgrims  
Nor little children.

Phaon, the Ferryman

Once, as day declined, came a gray-haired woman  
Hobbling slow along with unequal footsteps,  
Leaning on a staff, and in mean apparel, —  
Old and unlovely.

With a toothless smile, neither sweet nor winning,  
Quavering she spoke: "Phaon, I would gladly  
Cross to yonder shore — but I have no silver  
Now, to repay thee."

Phaon stood attent till her speech was ended,  
Then with reverent air led her gently forward,  
Seated her secure in his boat, and swiftly  
Rowed her safe over.

Then he guided her up the pebbly landing,  
Where she stood — behold! beautiful, transfigured,  
Marvellously fair in her youth immortal,  
Haloed with glory!

As he stood amazed — "Phaon," said the goddess,  
"Since thou hast revered thus the soul of woman,  
Even when disguised by old age and weakness,  
Tatters and sorrow —

"And hast not disdained ugliness and wrinkles,  
But with tender care revered and helped them,  
Now do I restore thy lost youth, and give thee  
Beauty immortal."



Straightway he became of all youths the fairest,  
Radiantly informed with transcendent graces  
Which no earthly ill, sickness, time, nor sorrow  
Ever could alter.

Poets have declared of his wondrous beauty,  
That it won away all the hearts of women ;  
But all women know it was not his beauty  
Made them adore him.

Nay — but if he was chivalrous and tender  
As this tale relates, is it any marvel  
That he was adored even by the peerless  
Silver-tongued Sappho ?

He would not betray whom he vowed to cherish,  
Leaving her unloved when her bloom had faded ; —  
Who would not leap down the Leucadian headland  
For such a lover ?

A SUN OF DEATH

**T**HE sun rose fierce and red,  
With a glare like an angry eye,  
And the grateful shadows fled  
As he burned along the sky.

No faintest sigh of breeze  
Dared try to cool his ire,  
The leaves hung limp on the trees,  
And the pavements scorched like fire.

## A Sun of Death

No vagrant lolled in the square  
And railed at the humid heat ;  
The beggar slunk to his lair,  
And the lost dog shunned the street.

For a sun of death shone down,  
As it a curse had been,  
On the close and stifling town  
And the crowds who toiled therein.

The stalwart laborer quailed  
Under the merciless heat,  
Faltered, staggered, and failed,  
And fell in the stony street ;

And work-worn women, bent  
On daily toil's dull round,  
Felt all their small strength spent,  
And fainted on the ground.

With quivering, heaving flank,  
Wide nostril and glazing eye,  
The straining car-horse sank  
On the cruel rails to die ;

The sparrows forgot to seek  
Their food in a noisy group,  
But panted, with open beak,  
And languorous wings a-droop ;

Life seemed to melt and seethe  
    Beneath the dog-star's frown,  
There was hardly air to breathe,  
    And a sun of death shone down.

In the close, unwholesome hives  
    Where dwell the crowded poor,  
Where scores of wretched lives  
    Exist but to endure,

The invalid worn with pain,  
    Gave up the useless strife,  
The struggle to regain  
    His slippery hold on life ;

The sick child gasped and sighed  
    For the coolness none could give,  
And the new-born baby died  
    Ere yet it had learned to live.

Ah, long will the fame remain  
    Of the fatal July days  
When body and soul and brain  
    Reeled under the killing rays ;

When there seemed an air-tight glass  
    Shut over the gasping town,  
When the sky seemed heated brass,  
    And a sun of death shone down.

SONGO RIVER

**F**ROM where Maine's farthest northern brook  
Along its valley tinkles,  
In shadow, full of tender glooms,  
In sun, of diamond-twinkles —  
To where some slow Floridian tide  
By broad savannas passes,  
To creep through slumbrous everglades,  
Or drowse in still morasses ;  
Of all the streams that sleep in shade,  
Or in the sunlight quiver,  
There's none so wilful, wild, and sweet  
As lovely Songo River.

The Arno lives in prose and rhyme,  
And bards of various fibre  
Have sung the grandeur of the Nile,  
The glory of the Tiber ;  
Sweet legends of the haunted Rhine  
Score all the poets' pages,  
The flower-bordered Avon sends  
Its ripples down the ages ;  
The arrowy Rhone, the blue Moselle,  
The sparkling Guadalquiver,  
Each has its fame — but who has sung  
The song of Songo River ?

It glints and gleams amid the trees,  
It skirts the grassy fallows,  
With eddies full of swirling sand,  
Or minnow-haunted shallows ;  
Here passing sombre alder-clumps  
Wherein the blue-jay perches,  
There gliding under solemn oaks,  
And light coquettish birches ;  
Now dallying like a truant child,  
Now hastening onward faster,  
Then almost pausing to reflect  
A goldenrod or aster ;  
It seems, beneath these perfect skies,  
In this unclouded weather,  
A crinkled silver thread that holds  
Two sapphire lakes together.

What shall we call thee, lovely stream,  
So changeful, wild, and pleasant ?  
There seems no fitter name than this,  
Sweet River of the Present.  
Since unto everything but now,  
Thy sudden turnings blind us,  
The future is unseen before,  
The past concealed behind us ;  
Thy course bewilders memory,  
With bends and curves incessant,  
Ahead, astern, we only see

A shining crystal crescent,  
As in and out, and out and in,  
Our boat, in gleam and shadow,  
Flits zig-zag, as a butterfly  
Across a clover meadow  
Dances and doubles, to elude  
A too-persistent wooer —  
Or as some timid wild thing turns  
To baffle its pursuer.

Well Nature loves the wayward stream,  
And bids her forces rally  
To deck, with fairest leaf and flower,  
Its happy native valley ;  
On either bank the elm trees wave,  
In graceful groups, or single,  
And now in arches overhead  
The maples meet and mingle ;  
With here and there a ripened leaf,  
A scarlet danger-token,  
That hints of wintry woes to come  
When autumn's truce is broken ;  
As if some pioneer of frost,  
While yet the days are mellow,  
Had blazed a pathway through the trees  
With signs of red and yellow ;  
While dark against the sunset's sheen  
Of gold-and-rosy billows

Cathedral towers of evergreens  
And rounded domes of willows  
Lie purple in the mellow haze, —  
An atmosphere elysian,  
Like some fair foreign city, seen  
By youth's enchanted vision.

Here, scarce an arm's length from our deck,  
The berried sumac blushes,  
And underneath our shallow keel  
We hear the swish of rushes,  
As merrily our dancing boat  
The sinuous channel follows,  
With motion like the crooked flight  
Of insect-chasing swallows ;  
Now veering toward the western hills,  
Now toward the eastern meadow,  
Now in the sunlight's fervid flood,  
Now swept in sudden shadow.

Thus does the happy river flow  
Through Nature's fairest mazes,  
By meadow-sweet, and silver-weed,  
And banks of ox-eye daisies ;  
The elder-flowers drop on its breast,  
The wild-rose stoops above it,  
And clematis, and bitter-sweet,  
And clambering wild-grape love it.

No clearer tide is smiled upon  
By bramble-bloom or aster,  
No sweeter theme was ever found  
By song's divinest master :  
Shall this most fair of northern streams  
Remain unsung forever ?  
Ah, who shall warble worthily  
The song of Songo River ?

OLD SONGS

❖ **L**OVE him who loves old songs ;  
To his sympathetic soul  
All the best of life belongs,  
All that makes it rich and whole ;  
For the ages gone before  
Bring him, from the world's wide round,  
Human hearts' divinest lore  
Wedded to melodious sound.

Sweetest thoughts of sweetest souls,  
Pulse of hearts now cold and still,  
On whose grave oblivion rolls, —  
Sorrow's plaint, delight's soft thrill,  
Love and valor, joy and woe,  
Hopes and dreams of other days,  
Heartbreak suffered long ago, —  
All are in the dear old lays ;



Tones of kindred, sweetheart, friend,  
 Strains for which the lone heart longs,  
 Youth's lost voices, — sweetly blend  
 In the echoes of old songs.

He who treasures, loves, and sings  
 These old throbs of tuneful rhyme,<sup>3</sup>  
 Learns the joy that living brings,  
 Learns the sorrows of all time;  
 Only music may reveal  
 All life's raptures, — all its wrongs;  
 These his heart must know and feel;  
 I love him who loves old songs!

## HOMELESS

**H**ER way was long and wearisome,  
 And bitter was the winter night;  
 She paused before a princely home,  
 Whose rooms were all ablaze with light;  
 She heard the children's joyful din,  
 She saw the smile their mother wore,  
 For he who last had entered in  
 Remembered not to shut the door.

And there was laughter, and the sweep  
 Of ivory keys by one who sung  
 Old songs, — such melodies as keep  
 The heart forever warm and young.

## Homeless

The sharp wind entered from the street,  
And crept along the velvet floor,  
Till one soft voice, low-toned and sweet,  
Said, with a shiver, "Shut the door!"

"Ah, yes!" she sighed, "shut out the cold;  
Shut out the snow and bitter wind;  
Shut out the friendless and the old,  
All who have grieved, and failed, and sinned;  
Shut out the wanderers, like me,  
Who dream of homes which are no more;  
Shut out all want and misery,  
And pain and suffering, — shut the door!"

"O heaven of home! how sadly they  
Whom destiny compels to rove,  
Wearing their restless lives away  
Outside of safety, peace, and love,  
Pause at thy gates, as I to-night,  
Calling thy sweet name o'er and o'er,  
Drinking thy music and thy light,  
Until the word comes — 'shut the door!'

"Why list the infant's merry shout,  
Why watch the mother's loving glance,  
O homesick soul, who wait'st without,  
Hindered of thine inheritance?"

Why yearn and pine for joys which are  
Denied to thee forevermore?  
The inaccessible and far,  
Love's land of promise? Shut the door!

“Ay, shut the door! but I shall keep  
The memory of the pleasant room,  
The pictured walls, the curtains' sweep,  
The carpet's wealth of woven bloom,  
The glimpse of faces sweet and fair,  
The dear old song I loved before,  
The light upon the children's hair, —  
I have them all, — now shut the door!”

LOVE'S FLITTING


**W**HEN Love is coming, coming,  
Meet him with songs and joy,  
Bid him alight and enter,  
Flatter and feast the boy;  
Crown him with gems and roses,  
Charm him with winning wiles,  
Bind him with lovely garlands,  
And kisses, and smiles.

When Love is going, going,  
Leaving you all alone,

## Under the Dog-star

Craving, the fickle tyrant,  
Some newer slave and throne, —  
Hinder him not, but quickly,  
Even though your heart may bleed,  
Saddle a horse for his journey,  
And bid him God-speed!

### UNDER THE DOG-STAR

 FOR a home within sight of the sea!  
O for a cot within sound of the wave!  
O for the salt wind so fragrant and free,  
Singing of mermaidens cool in their cave!  
O for the open sky, sun-bright and fair!  
O for the wave-sparkles born of its smile!  
O for deep breaths of the strong vital air  
Crisp with the coolness of mile after mile!  
  
O for a plunge in the life-giving sea,  
Deep in the brine, where the sea-creatures roam!  
Then to be tossed by the billows, and be  
Borne on their crests like a bubble of foam!  
Even Care's self would grow merry and bright,  
Lightsome and youthful and happy of heart,  
Washing away, in the liquid delight,  
Stain of the city and mire of the mart!

When the un pitying dog-star is high,  
When the parched pavements are hot to the feet,

When not a cloud-shadow softens the sky,  
When not a mist-wreath assuages the heat ;  
O for the salt wind so fragrant and free,  
Singing of mermaidens cool in their cave !  
O for a home within sight of the sea !  
O for a cot within sound of the wave !

THE VESPER SPARROW

**W**HEN soft the vesper sparrow sings  
His farewell to the day,  
And stir of leaves and whir of wings  
In silence die away, —

While odorous breaths of dewy trees,  
And grass, and blossoms fair,  
With hosts of lesser fragrances  
Are in the humid air, —

The cares of daily living seem  
Dissolved in calm and dew,  
And in the cool sweet dusk, I dream  
Of you, and only you.

Ah, me ! when life's last song is still,  
And night and silence come,  
And under shadows damp and chill  
My heart lies cold and dumb, —

## A Midnight Visitor

The love that all life's ills could brave  
Will death at last subdue?  
Or shall I dream within my grave  
Of you, and only you?

### A MIDNIGHT VISITOR

**A**FTER all the house is dark,  
And the last soft step is still,  
And the elm-bough's clear-cut shadow  
Flickers on the moonlit sill —

When the village lights are out,  
And the watch-dogs all asleep,  
And the misty silver radiance  
Makes the shade look black and deep —

When, so silent is the night,  
Not a dead leaf dares to fall,  
And I only hear the death-watch  
Ticking, ticking in the wall —

When no hidden mouse dares gnaw  
At the silence dead and dumb,  
And the very air seems waiting  
For a Something that should come —

## A Midnight Visitor

Suddenly, there stands my guest,  
Whence he came I cannot see ;  
Not a door has swung before him,  
Not a hand touched latch or key,

Not a rustle stirred the air ;  
Yet he stands there, grave and mute,  
In his eyes a look of greeting,  
In his hand an old-time flute.

Then, with all the courtly grace  
Of the old colonial school,  
From the curtain-shadowed corner  
Forth he draws a three-legged stool —

(Ah, it was not there before !  
Search as closely as I may,  
I can never, never find it  
When I look for it by day !)

Places it beside my bed,  
And, while silently I gaze  
Spellbound by his mystic presence,  
Seats himself thereon, and plays.

Gracious, stately, grave, and tall,  
Always dressed from crown to toe  
In the quaint, elaborate fashion  
Of a hundred years ago ;

## A Midnight Visitor

Doublet, small-clothes, silk-clocked hose,  
Wears my midnight melodist,  
Snowy ruffles in his bosom,  
Snowy ruffles at his wrist,

Silver buckle at his knee,  
Silver buckle on his shoe ;  
Powdered hair smoothed back and plaited  
In a stiff old-fashioned queue.

If I stir, he vanishes ;  
If I speak, he flits away ;  
If I lie in utter silence,  
He will sit for hours and play ;

Play old wailing minor airs,  
Melancholy, wild, and slow,  
Such, mayhap, as pleased the maidens  
Of a hundred years ago.

All in vain I wait to hear  
Ghostly histories of wrong  
Unconfessed and unforgiven,  
Unavenged and suffered long ;

Not a story does he tell,  
Not a single word he says —  
Only sits and gazes at me  
Steadily, and plays and plays.



Who is he, my midnight guest ?  
Wherefore does he haunt me so,  
Coming from the misty shadows  
Of a hundred years ago ?

THE POETS' SOLACE

**H**OMER was a beggar, who often wanted bread,  
And lacked, 'tis said, a shelter for his un-  
honed head ;

Poor, contemned, and friendless, blind, alone, and  
old,

What more wretched story could be lived or told ?

Terence was a bondman, doomed to toil and shame —  
Even the name he laurelled was his master's name ;

Tasso oft went hungry, thinly clad, and chill ;

Poor Cervantes famished, and Plautus turned a  
mill.

Sappho, sweetest singer, though so famed and fair,  
Found life's heavy burden more than she could bear ;

Dante died in exile, pining for his own ;

Petrarch, spite his honors, perished all alone.

Those who jeered at Homer little dreamed or knew  
That his voice would echo all the ages through ;

Genius clad in tatters is of small avail —

Camoens was a pauper — Boethius died in jail.

## The Poets' Solace

Thus to be a poet in the days of old  
Meant, it seems, to suffer hunger, toil, and cold ;  
    Languishing in prison, writhing under debt —  
    And the same hard fortune clings to poets yet.

If a singer misses poverty and wrong,  
There is surely something lacking in his song ;  
    Only through endurance comes the highest lore ;  
    Courage, then, my brothers — still, as 'twas of  
        yore,

Want, and care, and sorrow, scourging as with rods,  
Are but the anointing of the gracious gods,  
    Who, in love and wisdom looking largely down,  
    Chastening the poet, overlook the clown.

All who sing must suffer, else they sing not true ;  
Genius pays high taxes since the world was new ;  
    Then, O starving brothers, be content and brave,  
    Since Homer was a beggar, and Terence was a  
        slave.

Gird yourselves with patience, ye who sing in pain,  
Though a weary aching throb in heart and brain,  
    Why disclaim your birthright? Why complain  
        at ill  
    When Homer was a beggar, and Plautus turned a  
        mill?

WHY, LOVE, DO YOU PASS ME BY?

(VIRELAI NOUVEAU)

**W**HY, Love, do you pass me by,  
Because I am plain and shy?

You flutter my heart so nigh  
It hears you, as past you fly  
Aloft in your wilful glee,  
Yet what can I do but sigh,  
Why, Love, do you pass me by?

Alike on the bold and sly  
Your chains and your chaplets be ;  
The chains are but wreaths grown dry ;—  
In palace and cot you pry,  
You smile on the bond and free,  
Yet still in my grief I lie ;  
You've never a glance for me,  
Because I am plain and shy !

Alone in my woe am I ;  
Ah, dwellers in Arcadee,  
How happy, how blest are ye !  
Why, Love, do you pass *me* by ?

Unwearied your arts you ply  
Wherever your whims decree,

Why, Love, do You Pass Me By

And few from your wiles may flee,  
No matter how low or high  
Is scored, in the world's degree,  
The station they occupy,  
From hovel to king's levee ;  
The hero, the sage, the spy,  
The sage, and the debauchee,  
The rover who sails the sea,  
In tempest or under lee,  
The savage in rude tepee, —  
All these for your favors vie,  
And the nun in her veil, ev'n she ;  
In vain for your smile *I* try  
Because I am plain and shy !

The poet with lifted eye,  
The woodman who fells the tree,  
The courtier on abject knee,  
The star-seer who scans the sky,  
The ploughman with strength for three,  
The miser with hidden key,  
The warrior with sword on thigh,  
The flattered and praised, and he  
Who pines under obloquy,  
The scholar with wig awry,  
The trifler, the devotee,  
The gray-beard about to die,  
The stripling alert and spry,

## The Sweetest Songs are Never Sung

The captive whose days are dree, —  
All these do you hold in fee,  
While vainly to you I cry,  
“ Why, Love, do you pass *me* by ? ”

My heart and I wait ; but why  
Thus vainly and long wait we ?  
My pleading you still defy ;  
Because I am plain and shy,  
Why, Love, do you pass me by ?

## THE SWEETEST SONGS ARE NEVER SUNG

**T**HE sweetest songs are never sung,  
The tenderest words are never said ;  
They fail upon the faltering tongue,  
And feebler notes are breathed instead ;  
In vain we seek, with ardent soul,  
The noblest end, the loftiest good ;  
We never touch the highest goal,  
But fall far short of what we would.

The deepest love is never told ;  
No tongue its fervor can express ;  
Mere language is too dull and cold  
To speak its strength and tenderness ;

The Sweetest Songs are Never Sung

Thus truest hearts unvalued pass,  
No mortal knows their priceless worth,  
And so they live and die, alas,  
Alone, — the rarest of the earth!

Our dearest dreams fade unfulfilled ;  
Our brightest hopes evade pursuit ;  
By common cares choked down and killed,  
Our best ambitions fail of fruit ;  
Alas, for all our fond desire,  
Our empty pride, our foolish boast —  
We pray, and labor, and aspire,  
Yet never reach the uttermost !

ROCK ME TO SLEEP

NOTE.—The history of this famous poem, known wherever the English language is read, spoken, or sung, is so remarkable that a condensed statement of it will be of interest.

It first appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, Philadelphia, in May, 1860, and the author's remuneration was \$5, the only income she has ever received from a work from which so many thousands of dollars have been derived by others. It was included in the volume of poems by Mrs. Akers, published by Ticknor and Fields of Boston, but in no other of her books until the present volume, all other published forms having been without any consultation with the author, much less compensation to her, and often with not even the scant courtesy of acknowledgment. In fact, few literary productions have been so widely used and with such profit to so many — with the exception of the author.

Though not written as a song, it was set to music and published as such soon after its first appearance, at an admitted profit of \$5000 to its publishers during the first six months. Since that time it is known to have been issued by forty-nine different publishers of music, one of whom long ago printed on his title-page "Fiftieth Thousand," — and a list has been compiled of thirty composers in this country and in England who have written music for it. It has been used in compilations innumerable ; published here and in London as an illustrated Christmas gift-book ; it has figured with illustrations as a "recitation" ; during the Civil War it was printed on leaflets and scattered by thousands in the army ; it was long a feature with the "Christy Minstrels" ; here and abroad it

## Rock Me To Sleep

has been incorporated into several novels, many collections of songs, and at least one well-known play ; hundreds of copies have been begged from the author to be sold at fairs and for charitable purposes, and she has been overburdened with applications for autograph copies sometimes to be sold for considerable sums ; it has been sung all over this country and in England, in parlors, in the streets, and at concerts ; it has been found in the pockets of suicides, sung in army camps and hospitals, in police stations and in prisons. During the recent Spanish-American War it was as popularly sung among our soldiers in Cuba as it had been during the Civil War, and also among the troops in the South African War.

It would seem that the author should at least have been secure in the fame thus to be gained, if deprived of more substantial reward for her genius, but such is the possibility of human heartlessness that even the credit of originating the poem has at times been denied her. The authorship was claimed by several persons, and Mrs. Akers, denied the pecuniary reward for her boon to the world, and at times the honor of literary parentage, has known the crowning ingratitude of being accused of having stolen her own work. The climax was reached in a most curious instance of literary pretence. One Alexander M. W. Ball, a wealthy though unlettered New Jersey contractor, actually enlisted the sympathies of several prominent editors, a leading lawyer, and one or two members of Congress, to enable him to support his claim to having written the popular poem. He may have thought it a bit of fugitive verse, and been moved to palm off the poem upon his friends by a spirit of vanity, or perhaps in jest. But it grew to a serious matter, and he caused a book called his "Vindication," now known only as a rare literary curiosity, to be produced at a large expense. So much influence was



aroused in his favor, and so retiring had been the life and nature of the true author, that the pretender had the advantage for a time. Even so upright and careful a man as William Cullen Bryant, when preparing his "Library of Poetry and Song," wrote to Mrs. Akers desiring her to show cause why credit should not be given to Mr. Ball in that compilation. Mrs. Akers replied with proper spirit that the only reason was that Mr. Ball did not write the poem, and she *did*. The lifelong champion of literary honor, J. T. Trowbridge, however, spoke boldly in her favor, and finally the brilliant William Douglas O'Connor effectively demolished the claims of Ball, finding among the "specimens" given in the "Vindication," plagiarisms from other writers. With the ready chivalry of the reputable press, a number of editors wrote honorable apologies to Mrs. Akers, but the eminent citizens who had allowed the support of their names to the cause of the saddler made suddenly rich by army contracts never had the manliness to address the one whom they had so deeply wronged.

Truth has outlived falsehood, and the unjust claims of other years are but a cruel memory, and the English-speaking world to-day delights to render to Mrs. Akers the homage due for her immortal poem, the authorized version of which we take great pleasure in presenting.—THE PUBLISHERS.

**B**ACKWARD, turn backward, O Time, in your  
 flight,  
 Make me a child again just for to-night!  
 Mother, come back from the echoless shore,  
 Take me again to your heart as of yore;

## Rock Me To Sleep

Kiss from my forehead the furrows of care,  
Smooth the few silver threads out of my hair ;  
Over my slumbers your loving watch keep —  
Rock me to sleep, mother — rock me to sleep !

Backward, flow backward, O tide of the years !  
I am so weary of toil and of tears —  
Toil without recompense, tears all in vain —  
Take them and give me my childhood again !  
I have grown weary of dust and decay,  
Weary of flinging my soul-wealth away,  
Weary of sowing for others to reap —  
Rock me to sleep, mother — rock me to sleep !

Tired of the hollow, the base, the untrue,  
Mother, O mother, my heart calls for you !  
Many a summer the grass has grown green,  
Blossomed and faded, our faces between ;  
Yet, with strong yearning and passionate pain,  
Long I to-night for your presence again ;  
Come from the silence so long and so deep —  
Rock me to sleep, mother — rock me to sleep !

Over my heart in the days that are flown,  
No love like mother-love ever has shone ;  
No other worship abides and endures,  
Faithful, unselfish, and patient, like yours ;  
None like a mother can charm away pain  
From the sick soul and the world-weary brain ;

## Rock Me To Sleep

Slumbers soft calms o'er my heavy lids creep —  
Rock me to sleep, mother — rock me to sleep!

Come, let your brown hair, just lighted with gold,  
Fall on your shoulders again as of old;  
Let it drop over my forehead to-night,  
Shading my faint eyes away from the light;  
For with its sunny-edged shadows once more,  
Haply will throng the sweet visions of yore;  
Lovingly, softly, its bright billows sweep —  
Rock me to sleep, mother — rock me to sleep!

Mother, dear mother, the years have been long  
Since I last listened your lullaby song;  
Sing, then, and unto my soul it shall seem  
Womanhood's years have been only a dream.  
Clasped to your heart in a loving embrace,  
With your light lashes just sweeping my face,  
Never hereafter to wake or to weep —  
Rock me to sleep, mother — rock me to sleep!









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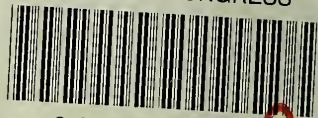
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